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**EXAMINING THE ROLE OF THE FEMALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
PRESIDENT'S SPOUSE:
PERCEPTIONS FROM SPOUSES, PRESIDENTS, AND BOARDS OF
TRUSTEES**

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by

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Dissertation

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Dedication

For my parents for so many reasons, but mainly because nothing in life brings me more
love, laughter, and great pottery than being your daughter.

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2011

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Kintzer's (1972) *The President's Wife: A Handbook for Wives of New Community College Presidents* was the first publication that provided insight into the world of the community college president's spouse. Written for female spouses, when community colleges were growing at a rate of one new college a week, this timely and relevant "how to guide" outlined in detail the do's and don'ts to being a successful community college presidential spouse.

Forty years later, women have transitioned from the spousal role to leading the college. Today women represent nearly 30% of all community college presidents. Research regarding the female president and her pathway to the presidency continues to emerge, but little attention has been focused on the president's husband and his role as a presidential spouse. Understanding and investigating the role of the male spouse is significant as more women continue their pathway to the presidency, and there is anecdotal evidence that the spouse of a community college president can be influential, albeit the college does not employ the spouse.

This qualitative study examined the role of the female community college president's spouse. Utilizing Vaughan (1987) and Smith's (2001) studies regarding the role of the community college spouse as a framework, this study posed the following research questions:

1. How do male spouses describe their roles?
2. How do female community college presidents describe their spouse's roles?
3. How do members of the boards of trustees describe the roles of male spouses?

Fifteen participants, including five female college presidents, five male spouses, and five trustees were interviewed for this study. Participants reside throughout the Southeast, Southwest, and Northwest regions of the United States, representing rural and suburban community colleges at both single and multi-campus institutions.

Findings suggest the male spouse plays an important role in his wife's pathway presidency and supporting her throughout the entire presidency. The male spouse also has a public life role and a private life role. Ultimately, the role of the male spouse is to support his wife so she can be a successful community college leader.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction	1
Background.....	3
Statement of the Problem.....	4
Purpose of the Study	4
Research Questions.....	5
Methodology	5
Significance of the Study.....	6
Definition of Terms	6
Delimitations.....	7
Limitations	7
Assumptions.....	8
Summary	9
Chapter Two: Literature Review	10
Community College Governance and Leadership	10
Women in Higher Education	13
University Presidential Spouse	15
The Male University Presidential Spouse.....	20
The Female Community College Presidential Spouse	21
The Lone Male Spouse	24
The Community College Male Spouse.....	24
Spousework Today	26
Limitations of Previous Research	29
Limitations of Previous Studies.....	30
Summary	30
Chapter Three: Methodology and Procedures	31

Research Design	32
Description of Study Sample	32
Procedures for Data Collection and Instruments	36
Data Analysis	39
Summary	41
Chapter Four: Results	42
Context of the Study	42
Participant overview	42
Spouse profile	44
President profile	44
Presidential couple profile	45
Trustee profile	45
Institutional profile	46
Findings	46
General Involvement with the College	47
Life Before the Presidency	49
Educational support	50
His career and location changes, for her career	51
The search process	54
Expectations of the Presidential Spouse	61
Entertaining	61
Working with the president's assistant	64
Trustee expectations	66
Public Wife, Public Life	68
Living logo or living logos?	68
Public events	74
Identity	78
Public Wife, Private Life	79

Confidant vs. advisor	83
Impact of the Presidency.....	90
The good, the bad, and the neutral.....	94
Additional Research Findings.....	99
The presidential spouse world is still a woman's world	99
Location, location, location	100
Faith	100
Summary	101
Chapter Five: Analysis.....	102
Theme One: General Support Role.....	102
Analysis	102
Implications and recommendations	102
Theme Two: Life Before the Presidency	103
Analysis	103
Implications and recommendations	104
Theme Three: Role Expectations.....	105
Analysis	105
Implications and recommendations	106
Theme Four: Public Life Role	106
Analysis	106
Implications and recommendations	107
Theme Five: Private Life Role.....	108
Analysis	108
Implications and recommendations	109
Theme Six: Impact of the Presidency	110
Analysis	110
Implications and recommendations	110
The Typical Female Community College President's Spouse and His Roles	111

The Good Male Spouse.....	111
Recommendations for Future Research	113
What about the male community college president’s female spouse?	113
What about LGBT spouses and partners?.....	114
What about single presidents and long-term relationship couples?.....	114
Conclusion	115
Appendix A.....	117
Appendix B	118
Appendix C.....	119
Appendix D.....	122
Appendix E	124
Appendix F	126
Appendix G.....	128
Appendix H.....	129
Appendix I	130
Appendix J	131
Appendix K.....	133
Appendix L	135
References.....	137

Chapter One: Introduction

Prior to Kintzer's (1972), *The President's Wife: A Handbook for the Wives of the New Community College Presidents*, little literature regarding the role of the community college presidential spouse existed. Community colleges experienced unprecedented growth during the 1960s and 1970s, with almost one new college opening each week (AACC, 2010a), so it seems fitting that literature regarding the community college president's spouse (CCPS) would start to emerge during this time.

However, little remained known of the role of the CCPS through the mid-1980s. Vaughan (1986) noted that, "nothing had been published on the role of the spouse of the community college president" (p. 143), so Vaughan, himself, published *The Community College Presidency* (1986), highlighting the role of the female spouse.

Ironically, even though there was a steady rise of female community college presidents in the 1980s and early 1990s, when women came to represent 11% of all community college presidents (Vaughan & Weisman, 2008), community colleges remained a man's world (June, 2007).

Research on the role of the CCPS is important as the "impact of the presidency is often just as great, and in some cases greater, on the spouse as on the president" (Vaughan, 1987, p. 4). Described at times as the college's "second most visible public relations officer, a finder of funding sources for endowed chairs and donations of property and funds to the institution, a part of the university's living logo—thus has the college president's spouse been characterized and praised" (Vaughan, 1987, p. 4).

A year after authoring *The Community College Presidency*, Vaughan edited an anthology entitled *The Presidential Team: Perspectives on the Role of the Spouse* (1987), describing subjective, qualitative perspectives of the role of the CCPS by providing a glimpse into the world of several female spouses; it also offered insight from an individual male presidential spouse. In contrast, the male spouse's account of his role differed from the females who contributed to the publication. Many of the women provided insights about entertaining and being gracious hostesses, while the male spouse wrote of being married to a very successful woman (Shaw, 1987). Rather than formalizing an objective, empirical study, Vaughan's piece, *The Presidential Team: Perspectives on the Role of the Spouse*, provided presidential spouses an avenue to tell their stories and readers to draw their own conclusions.

The first research study on the presidential male spouse's role was conducted by Smith in 2001, 30 years after Kintzer's first work on the topic. Smith repeated Vaughan's 1986 study outlined in *The Community College Presidency*, yet focused the research on male spouses. Smith studied 43 female community college presidents and their male spouses with the hypothesis that "the role of the male spouse would not differ to any great degree from that of the female" (Smith, 2001, abstract). Smith found some similarities and differences between the roles of the female and male presidential spouses.

Since Smith's 2001 study, no scholarly research on the role of the female community college presidential spouse, or community college spouse role in general,

has been published. As women continue to attain more leadership positions in community colleges, one can expect more male spouses will follow. However, little is known of this emerging role. Thus, this study seeks to build upon Smith's findings utilizing a qualitative approach to examine the role of the female community college president's spouse.

Background

The community college has its roots in open access and equity for all. Vaughan (1995) asserts the mission of the community college should "provide access to postsecondary educational programs and services that lead to a strong, more vital communities" (p. 3) and "embodies Thomas Jefferson's belief that education should be practical as well as liberal and should serve the public good as well as individual needs" (p. 1). Today, almost 1200 community colleges provide educational access and equity to the 11.8 million students who enroll each year, accounting for more than half of all undergraduate students in the nation (AACC, 2010b).

While community colleges serve all types of students, 86% of community college students range in age from 39 or younger, and the average age of community college students is 28. The majority of students is female (56%) and enrolls on a part-time basis (60%). Minority students represent 40% of all students, and almost half (42%) of community college students are first-generation college students. Forty-six percent of all community college students receive some type of financial aid with 43% receiving

federal assistance (AACC, 2010b). Providing educational opportunities to such a diverse student population is the foundation of the community college mission.

Statement of the Problem

Community colleges educate almost half of the entire higher education student body (AACC, 2010b). While females represent 28% of the nearly 1200 current community college CEOs (Vaughan & Weisman, 2008), resulting in 336 women currently leading community colleges, very little focus has been given to the role of the CCPS, particularly that of the male spouse. Understanding and investigating the role of the male spouse is significant as more women continue their pathway to the presidency, and there is anecdotal evidence that the spouse of a community college president can be influential, albeit the spouse is not employed by the college. Vaughan (1987) asserts,

Until the spouse's role is more fully defined, understood, and appreciated, the community college can never reach its full potential. To ignore the spouse's role is to fail to understand the complexities and potential for the presidential leadership team. (p. 98)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this exploratory study was to describe the role of the female community college president's spouse. In particular, it was designed to identify the role as perceived by the spouses, female community college presidents, and members of the boards of trustees.

Research Questions

In order to investigate the role of the female community college president's spouse, the researcher addressed the following questions:

- 1) How do male spouses describe their roles?
- 2) How do female community college presidents describe their husband's roles?
- 3) How do members of the boards of trustees describe the roles of male spouses?

Methodology

This study followed qualitative research guidelines. Qualitative research seeks to gain insight and understanding of how people experience the world and is grounded in interpretivism (Willis, 2007). This philosophical approach is based on the assumption that human beings view the world they live in with unique perspectives and that there is something to be gained from exploring those perceptions. This research sought, particularly, to understand how male spouses of female community college presidents perceive and experience their role through an interpretivist lens.

Using the interpretivist paradigm, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted using an interview protocol. These interviews were conducted with five purposefully selected CCPS (males), five female community college presidents, and five boards of trustees members from suburban and rural community colleges in Southeast, Southwest, and Northwest regions of the United States. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed in order to assess the findings.

Significance of the Study

Females represent 28% of the current 1200 community college presidents, and nearly half of them are married (Vaughan & Weisman, 2008). By investigating the female community college presidential spouse role, this study advances the limited understanding of the male presidential spouse and how he experiences the role. Further, this study provides research-based information for current and future female presidents, boards of trustees, male presidential spouses, and future scholars.

Definition of Terms

Boards of Trustees—The group of individuals, either appointed or elected, that governs a community college by acting as a unit; representing the common good; employing, evaluating, and supporting the chief executive officer; defining policy standards for college operations; creating a positive climate; monitoring performance; supporting and advocating for the college; and, leading as a thoughtful team (ACCT, 2010).

Community College—Public educational institution that awards certificates, diplomas, and associate's degrees.

Community College President—Chief executive officer responsible for the oversight of a community college who reports to a board of trustees.

Marriage—A legally recognized union between a man and a woman.

Role—Patterns of behavior based on one's defined position in a relationship.

Spousework—Range of tasks that the spouses of college presidents perform or may perform (Oden, 2007).

Delimitations

Setting the parameters of this study, the researcher limited the scope of this investigation to married couples where the female is a community college president. The researcher acknowledges that not all marriages are comprised of two people of opposite sexes; but for the purposes of this study, heterosexual couples were the focus as the researcher is interested in the role of the male spouse. Current female community college presidents and their male spouses were invited to participate. The researcher limited this study to current members of boards of trustees that govern community colleges in which the president is female married to a male. This study does not include true dual-career couples or presidential couples residing in urban areas. The researcher acknowledges these delimitations and recognizes the study is confounded by these constraints.

Limitations

Qualitative research seeks to understand how people experience the world rather than a quantifiable measurement that can be objectively applied. As a result, this study provides insight from particular individuals based on their worldview and life experiences, yet it does represent the experiences of all male spouses. Beyond the limitations of qualitative research, the study also has several other limitations. Spouses, presidents, and members boards of trustee from urban regions were not interviewed. Also, there is no representation from the Midwest and northeast regions of the United States. In addition, all five of the male spouses in this study classify themselves as

Caucasian, meaning there is no diversity with regards to race. Caution should be practiced as the study sample is small (15 participants), and the findings may not be generalized to include all male spouses and their experiences at all types of community colleges.

Assumptions

By choosing to study the role of the male spouse of a female community college president, I acknowledge several personal assumptions I held during this study. First, I assumed the role of the male spouse was a worthy topic to investigate because there is a shortage of research on this growing trend. Second, I assumed there would be value-added outcome that will prove beneficial to female community college leaders, their male spouses, boards of trustees, and scholars. Third, unlike Smith (2001), I assumed the experiences of a male presidential spouse to vary from the experiences of a female presidential spouse. For example, I assumed a male spouse would not engage in the entertaining role, work with the president's assistant, or define himself as a presidential spouse. I assumed this based on my review of the literature, my personal experiences with men married to women in various leadership positions, and general conversations with female community college presidents prior to this study. I also assumed participants would be honest and forthright in their responses; that data collected via interviews would be an accurate portrayal of the role of the male spouse, although limited in scope.

Summary

After providing the historical and leadership contexts of the community college, this chapter provided an overview of the research study into the role of the female community college presidential spouse. As the number of female community college presidents increases, it is to be expected that the number of male spouses will increase as well. Because there is little known about this particular role, this study sought to provide insight into the experiences males have being married to female community college presidents. The following chapters review relevant literature on this topic; outline the methodological approach I took to engage in this study; present the findings and results as described by male spouses, female presidents, and boards of trustees members; and provide an analysis and implications of my examination into the role of the female community college's spouse. The ultimate purpose of this study was to research and describe the current role of a CCPS (males) in order to add to current, limited research on the topic.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Chapter one introduced the purpose of this research-based approach by describing the role of the male spouse in order to create the context for this study. The literature reviewed in chapter two outlines the historical context of the presidential spouse at the university level, the historical context of the community college spouse role as it relates to both female and male spouses, and the current state of spousework. The review highlights studies that focus on these particular areas as well as address gaps in past and current research, creating a foundation for this study on the role of the female community college president's spouse.

Community College Governance and Leadership

The community college president, often referred to as the CEO of the organization, is defined by leading one of the following types of community colleges: college in multi-college district, district office of multi-college district, main campus of multi-campus college, state administrative units, single-campus college, 2-year campus or university, separate accreditation, and 2-year campus or university sharing accreditation (Vaughan & Weisman, 2008). However, preparing for the role differs:

The university presidency is like no other position in the academy. It has been my experience there is no accurate job description for the position and, as such, there is no true preparation. In fact, expectations of the position vary greatly from campus to campus—and from time to time even on the same campus. (Gordon & Gordon, 1996, p. 51)

Regardless, community college presidents tend to be White males in their mid-to-late-50s who hold a terminal degree, most oftentimes a doctorate. The majority of community college presidents have held positions in academic affairs with almost 40% holding the position of Chief Academic Officer directly before advancing to the college presidency (Vaughan & Weisman, 2008). While this percentage represents the majority of community college presidents, Vaughan and Weisman do not address the desired leadership competencies and characteristics boards of trustees are looking for in a community college president.

The community college presidency is a unique position. Unlike a politician who is elected by the people for the people, the community college president is selected by an appointed or elected board, for the community, but responsible for overseeing the college and its staff. As one presidential wife noted:

The president can survive difficulties with faculty, with students, with alumni and with almost any other group associated with the university so long as he retains the support of the board, but if he loses the support of the board he can no longer survive no matter how popular he may be with other groups. (Olson, 1984, p. 63)

This support of a board of trustees has been well researched. Plinske and Packard (2010) researched the desired characteristics of future college presidents based on boards of trustees' perceptions. They found the following attributes to be important, in rank

order, for all future community college presidents. The last item is of great importance to this study:

- Passionate about education—is a champion of community colleges
- Dependable—follows through on commitments; arrives on time or early for appointments and meetings
- Energetic—has a high-energy level and is in good health
- Calm under pressure—ability to juggle multiple challenges
- Charismatic—is well liked and respected
- Community involvement—membership in Rotary Club or Kiwanis
- Organized—ability to manage time and resources effectively
- Presence—looks the part of a president, is the image of the institution
- Renaissance person—well rounded and well versed in multiple areas
- Self-aware—has a sense of who he or she is as a person
- Self-motivated—willing to take on challenges
- Tactful—can provide constructive criticism diplomatically
- Well balanced—has a balanced personal and professional life; pursues hobbies and diversions
- Friendly—good sense of humor
- Family person—is married. (Plinske & Packard, 2010, p. 297)

While marriage ranked last on the list of characteristics, Plinske and Packard (2010) argue that marital status is important to boards of trustees when looking to hire a

community college president. This implication leads to the consideration of the college presidential spouse.

Women in Higher Education

Today women represent the majority of higher education students; however, a gap still remains when it comes to leading the institutions they so readily attend. While women continue to push the glass ceiling, is it at community colleges where women are making the most significant gains in enrollment, faculty and staff positions and leadership positions, and salary increases (Lapovsky & Larkin, 2009).

Women became the majority of college graduates during the 1981-1982 academic year (Cohn & Fry, 2010). During the 2006-2007 academic year, women represented 57% of all undergraduate college students and received 60% of all college degrees (NCES, 2008). At community colleges, women received 62% of all associates degrees compared to 57% of bachelor's degrees, 62% of master's degrees, and 50% of doctoral and professional degrees (NCES, 2008). While women continue to pursue and earn higher education degrees and credentials, men are not only earning fewer degrees, they are also less likely to attend college (Lapovsky & Larkin, 2009). However, this trend has not yet translated to the faculty and leadership at higher education institutions.

While women have made great strides in higher education attainment, the world of academia has not kept pace when it comes to faculty members and college leadership. It remains a man's world. Overall, community colleges have seen greater representation of women in both faculty and presidential appointments than their four-year public and

private counterparts, but faculty members and presidents on average still do not reflect the diverse student body they serve (Lapovsky & Larkin, 2009).

Women make up 42% of all full-time faculty at colleges, which is up from 32 % in 1991 (Lapovsky & Larkin, 2009). Forty-nine percent of community college faculty is women compared to private liberal arts college faculty (42%), master's degree-granting institutions (41%), and research universities (30%) (NCES, 2008). Additionally, women on average earn less than their male counterparts at all institutions with the smallest salary gap of 5% at community colleges (NCES, 2008).

The pathway to the presidency traditionally has been through the academic ranks, so it is not surprising males far out number females when it comes to college leadership. Currently, 23% of college presidents are women, which is not a significant increase from almost 10% 20 years ago (ACE, 2007). Additionally, during the past 10 years the number of female college presidents has remained fairly constant at 500 (ACE, 2007). Female presidents are not paid as well as their male counterparts either. In 2008 only two women made the top ten of the presidential salary highest paid lists that were reported throughout the year (Chronicle, 2008).

Women at community colleges once again are leading the way representing almost 30% of college presidents compared to 14% at doctoral granting institutions (ACE, 2007). In recent years, the Ivy League has seen the greatest rise of female leadership when, for a time, four of the eight sitting presidents were female with Brown

having named the first African-American female president of the renowned universities (Lapovsky & Larkin, 2009).

University Presidential Spouse

Even though the position of the presidential spouse does not appear on any college organizational chart, it was during the late 1970s and early 1990s that literature started to develop on this unique role. Marguerite Walker Corbally's (1977) study, *The Partners: Sharing the Life of a College President*, was the first work to move beyond anecdotal data to a research-based study that examined the role of the university presidential spouse. Corbally maintains her work "is not intended to be a description of how the job ought to be done, but rather to be an outline of what is being done to enable those concerned to recognize what they may want to accept or reject in their own definition of the job" (p. vii).

Corbally's study solicited over 500 presidential spouses and yielded a response rate of 47%. The majority of spouses ranged in age from 40-59 and held a bachelor's degree. The presidential couples, on average, had at least two children, but not more than four; and the average presidential spouse spent 26 hours per week on family-related issues, closely followed by 19 hours per week on house duties such as supervising staff, ordering, planning, accounts, and shopping. Corbally (1977) concluded that a prototypical presidential spouse would be as follows:

She would be intelligent, well educated, sensitive, dedicated, conscientious, and capable. She works hard for her husband's employer and resents being thought of

as 'pampered.' She reveres the school and all it stands for and values the experiences which accrue to her as wife of the president. She is aware of the opportunities available to her but often feels she has 'earned' them or that they are substitutes for personal opportunities she has had to forgo in the execution of her responsibilities to her husband's job. She is the subject to the usual range of human emotions, and her joys and sorrows are subject to public scrutiny and comment. She realizes that her efforts on behalf of the school may never be acknowledged and serves solely because of her own belief that she is filling an important role. (p. 7)

Regardless of hours spent on each individual duty, Corbally (1977) found the wife's roles could be condensed into three distinct categories:

1. The wife of the president of the university or college supervises the maintenance and operation of the official house, a university facility.
2. She entertains in that house or other available facilities for the benefit of the school. Often she serves as an adviser to others entertaining or arranging public events for the school.
3. She participates actively in the public relations efforts of the school by attending and supporting town and campus events and traveling with her husband to national conferences and to meet alumni, donors and other benefactors for the school. (pp. 53-54)

Corbally finishes her book noting that the role of the president's spouse is indeed controversial. While the women in her study spent on average 55 hours per week on university-related duties, younger women, who themselves married a college president, are inclined to keep their professional jobs and question the presidential spouse role all together. Regardless of an individual spouse's opinion or decision as to how she sees the role or identifies with the role, Corbally finalizes with a piece of advice for all new presidential spouses from those that have come before them—"be yourself" (p. 143).

Several years after Corbally's study, the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) convened a group to form the first Committee of Presidents' and Chancellors' Spouses (Magrath & Harrold, 1984). As a result, the NASULGC and the University of Minnesota conducted a follow-up study to Corbally's work, as an updated literature review found very little in the way of the president's spouse role (Magrath & Harrold, 1984). Their study, yielding 104 responses (a 73% return rate) had 109 questions that was divided into the following seven sections: "(1) Your Community; (2) The Campus You Serve; (3) Your Home; (4) Your family; (5) Your Role and the Job with the President/Chancellor; (6) Yourself and; (7) Future" (p. 15).

Significant findings from this study addressed the fact over half of the survey respondents live in an official university house. Over 75% of the presidential couples have children living at home; even though the children lived at home and on campus, the respondents declared that there were not enough hours in the day for family time as a

disadvantage. The majority of spouses reported being very clear about their presidential spouse duties, which are outlined in more detail below. While there is no official job title or job evaluation, spouses suggest from their experiences that boards of trustees could better understand the role should board members ask for such reports (Magrath & Harrold, 1984).

While the study yielded findings in each of the seven areas, once again an overall understanding of the spouse's profile emerged. Much like Corbally's profile from a few years earlier, the NASULGC found the average presidential spouse during the early 1980s is as follows:

The 'typical' campus spouse is female, over 50 years of age, and in a stable marriage situation. She is in a regular physical fitness program and is well educated. She probably does not work for pay outside the role of spouse, but gives her institution 21 or more hours per week and donates five or more of those hours per week to a wide range of community volunteer work...The spouse lives in an official house and accepts a multiplicity of responsibilities, including the work of hostess, supervisor of staff, entertaining coordinator, director of the official house, food arranger, campus representative at national meetings, campus correspondents, community leadership roles, tour guide, and general public relations person. She might or might not have been included in the governing board interview process, but strongly feels she should have been. No one explained her position or the expectations of her role; she learned through

on-the job training, observing others, talking to predecessors, and by common sense. She enjoys the role of hostess and representational work, in large part because she enjoys people in general. Her greatest concern is for the president or chancellor, the pressures he experiences, and the lack of time with him and her family. (Magrath & Harrold, 1984, p. 21)

Findings did suggest the appearance of differences in the spouse's role when it comes to education and age. While causation was not found, there was a correlation regarding the following duties:

1. The higher the degree a spouse has earned, the more likely she or he will be employed outside the campus role.
2. Younger spouses have stronger feeling about the lack of personal privacy. They are most likely to be frustrated with the sense that their way of life is alerted and out of control and that they spend too little time with their family.
3. Of the four who have written job descriptions, all are under 50 years of age.
4. Younger spouses enjoy editing the president's or chancellor's speeches and being public speakers more than older spouses.
5. Older spouses enjoy being the director of the official house and supervising the cleaning person more than young spouses. (Magrath & Harrold, 1984, p. 22)

In another vein, in the 1980s, Kerr and Gade (1986) argued that the presidential spouse's role is much like the role of a minister's wife:

The spouse was once a known quantity. That quantity was the minister's wife. In fact, most early presidents were ministers. The minister's wife kept the house, was responsible for social affairs, helped with the personal side of the ministry as, for example, in visiting the sick, and was the minister's only confidant and source of psychological support. (p. 112)

They also assert that the community college presidential spouse has never "been as important as in the private, residential liberal arts colleges and in the research universities that once dominated the higher education scene" (p. 113). Congruent with Kerr and Gade's notion, today outline the role of the modern university presidential spouse.

The Male University Presidential Spouse

The only findings present in current literature on the role of the male spouse are about the university (not community college) president's male spouse (Vargas, 2008), which was not solely a study on male spouses. In recent years, several former academicians have found themselves as the first husband of a university. For some, this role has been a way to remain active at the university after retirement, but many of these males have found themselves at all together new colleges (Baenninger, 2009).

One university male spouse admits he is no good at housekeeping, decorating, or attending elegant dinner parties. However, he states that he is good at shining his wife's shoes, dropping her off and picking her up at the airport, chauffeuring her around town,

and “showing up at college gatherings...looking clean, sober and well-pressed...”

(Baenninger, 2009, p. 2). That spouse went on to note:

Presidential spouses, whether male or female, must maintain their self-esteem while playing second fiddle...My spouse, like most spouses, wants an autonomous, happy, energetic equal with whom to share a busy life. Figuring out how to do that is a challenge for every married couple. (p. 6)

The Female Community College Presidential Spouse

Vaughan (1986) was the first to study the role of the community college presidential spouse. At a time when most presidents were male, Vaughan’s research investigated the role of the female spouse. His seminal work created the first profile of the community college presidential spouse.

In the 1980s, the average community college spouse was 48, ranging from 26 to 74 years of age; spouses’ ages were close to that of their presidential husbands. However, there was great contrast between educational attainment of female spouses and male community college presidents. Seventy-seven percent of community college presidents held doctorates compared with only 4% of their spouses. Vaughan also noted 20% of spouses had earned a high school diploma or less, which is very much in contrast to the presidents’ educational attainment (1986).

The majority of female spouses in the 1980s worked in a paid job outside the home with over two-thirds of those spouses working at least part-time or more. The majority of those employed worked in education. For those that do not work outside the

home, 36% listed homemaker as their occupation. In one case, Vaughan noted a particular spouse was barred by the board from working outside of the home with the intent to dedicate her time in her role as presidential spouse (Vaughan, 1986).

Vaughan's study also investigated how spouses described their role as a presidential spouse. Most spouses saw their role as supporter rather than a partner in the presidential role. The female spouses had two distinct viewpoints on their roles. Some females found comfort in the role while others felt underappreciated. As one spouse stated:

It should be remembered that there is a woman in the audience when the husband gives all of the speeches and gets all of the kind words said, when in reality she is the one who gives the dinners, the one who arranges the receptions the one who says 'Hey, did you remember to...' She is the one who sees that he has clean shirts, the one who takes him to the airport, and the one who smiles in the right place at the right time. I think it is time somebody says thank you. (pp. 147-148)

Vaughan's study highlighted the two main roles female spouses typically take on when married to a college president—entertaining and confidant. Both are quite different, but Vaughan found both roles are likely to exist for female spouses.

Unlike university presidential spouses, community colleges spouses are expected to entertain and host events on a limited budget (Kerr & Gade, 1986; Vaughan, 1987). As one community college spouse noted, "[university spouses] spend more on the

catering bill for one event than I spend all year. They have florists, caterers, bartenders, etc. It is just a whole different world” (Vaughan, 1986, p. 152). However, even though the spouses were not employed by the college, half of the community college spouses in Vaughan’s study did receive some assistance, ranging from college personnel to catering support, to help with respective correspondence and food for such events (Vaughan, 1986).

The “confidant” is the other role female presidential spouses take on. According to Vaughan, “84% of the presidents confide in their spouses about problems and issues facing the college” (Vaughan, 1986, p. 154). However, confiding in a spouse is not the same as acting on advice given. Only 22% of presidents take and act on their spouses’ advice all the time. This can often lead to a sense of frustration for the female spouse. But this is not the only frustration spouses face (Vaughan, 1986).

Many spouses found the lack of a defined role a source of frustration. While Vaughn (1986) argues that creating a definition to fit all spouses and all communities is not ideal or even possible, he does suggest that the spousal role should be defined clearly from the onset of the new community college president taking office. While some female spouses have had the luxury of a defined role, there is a dearth of research providing a suggested role for the male community college presidential spouse (Vargas, 2008).

The Lone Male Spouse

As noted in chapter one, Colin Shaw's chapter, "The Male Spouse" (1987), provided the first insight into the role of the community college male spouse. At a time when female community college presidents were rare, Shaw found himself at the age of 40 married to a college president. Dr. Ruth Shaw became a community college president of an urban, single-college institution; and according to Shaw, during the 1980s, male spouses were "confronted with the ambiguous expectations regarding their performance in their role as presidential spouses and may have great flexibility as they negotiated their roles" (Shaw, 1987, p. 59).

Unlike some of his female counterparts in Vaughan's book, Shaw did not spend time planning events to support his wife's presidential duties; he was an administrator at another community college, working for a female president. Shaw saw the presidential spouse role as one that should mold itself to the needs of the college; the role is not static, but dynamic for each spouse and each individual college. Shaw wrote, "...roles are more or less permanent individual solutions formulated to perform needed social functions," and believes couples should collaboratively negotiate presidential couple roles (Shaw, 1987, p. 61).

The Community College Male Spouse

Fifteen years after Vaughan's initial research on the role of a community college spouse, Smith began a study with the hypothesis that the male spouse role would not differ from that of a female spouse (Smith, 2001). Repeating Vaughan's research

method, Smith looked at the same types of demographic information as well as role perceptions from the male spouse's point of view. From the 144 female CEOs identified as community college presidents, 87 responded, with 43 of those being married. Those 43 presidents and their spouses participated in Smith's study.

As compared to females' spouses, male spouses are older even though the average age of the male and female presidents are similar (Smith, 2001). This is not surprising given that women traditionally marry older men (Cohn & Fry, 2010). In contrast to the 4% of the 90 female spouses that have doctorates, 32% of the 43 male spouses held a doctoral degree (Smith, 2001). Overall, the level of higher education achieved by male spouses is greater than that of female spouses.

Much like female spouses, male spouses seek to support their mate and define their own role as presidential spouse. One male indicated he did not see his role as a president's spouse as different than that of any spouse. His goal is to support his wife in her endeavors and be a good husband (Smith, 2001). While previous research reports several roles for the CEO spouse, Smith found contrasts between the roles of the male and female spouses.

With regard to entertaining and playing host, typically male spouses do not engage in planning events. They often escort or attend events with their presidential spouse, but unlike female spouses who often take care of the home and preparing for guests, male spouses do not typically take on that role. In fact, it has been reported that

male spouses often share equal responsibility with their presidential wives when it comes to doing housework (Smith, 2001).

The major difference Smith found regarding the roles of females and males is “that male spouses viewed themselves more as advisors; whereas, the female spouse saw themselves as confidants” (Smith, 2001, p. 230). According to male spouses, their wives seek out advice and utilize them as a sounding board. Female presidents often seek the advice of their male spouses regarding “fiscal matters, personnel, union negotiations, legislators, reorganization, and marketing strategies” (Smith, 2001, pp. 231-232). While Smith and others have added to the body of literature regarding the role of the female community college presidential spouse, research is in order to describe this role better.

Spousework Today

The role of the presidential spouse is as relevant and ill-defined as ever. As recently as March 2010, The University of Tennessee Board of Trustees formed a committee to examine the ever-changing role of the presidential spouse, while in June 2009, it was reported that then University of Las Vegas Nevada president, David Ashley, sent a note of apology to the Board of Regents and Chancellor Jim Rogers, regarding Ashley’s wife’s communications with university employees. Even though she was not employed by the university, her abrupt style of communication became a point of contention with university employees (Richmond, 2009). And, as recently as May 2011, The University of Vermont President’s wife was relieved of her volunteer duties for allegedly having an inappropriate relationship with the associate vice president for

development and alumni affairs, Michael Schultz (Nu, 2011). Ironically, Schultz's dissertation focused on the role of the university president's spouse in fundraising and was read as a part of the literature review for this study.

Google searches yield the same type of results. At Drake University, the president's spouse, Madeleine Maxwell, has her very own web page that is directly accessible from the Office of the President's page. The webpage provides information about "Maddy" and how, as the "First Lady," she has made the president's home the hub of activity at Drake (Drake, 2010). Pictures of the first lady engaged in various activities are provided on the page.

Cooper, a university presidential spouse, notes the traditional responsibilities of the past have a presence in her role as a presidential spouse today. Attending a training seminar sponsored by the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities entitled, "Presidential Spouse 101: My Spouse is a College President, Now What Do I Do?" Cooper received a manual outlining the proper way to set a table and how to create the perfect dinner menu. Her days are filled with social events, where she alone represents the college and where her evenings are filled with gatherings where she works the room with her husband, known as the first lady, but feeling more like Gloria Steinham meets Lucille Ball. While Cooper may not have dishpan hands, she argues that she "was a bow on the presidential package—expected to sacrifice family, career, identity and self in service to the institution" (Cooper, 2007, p. C2). For some institutions, that bow comes at a price.

Often seen as a package deal, 20% of universities today pay presidential spouses upwards of \$75,000, in some instances, for their services. Some of these payments may simply mean “standing by my man” at college related events to clearly, outlined responsibilities and titled positions (Cooper, 2007, p. C2). Curris, a presidential spouse, agrees that spouses should be compensated for the time they dedicate to the college, as this duty takes them away from other responsibilities such as tending to their children and careers (Moser, 2008, p. B8). Arguably, most female spouses, regardless of financial support, pay a personal price in their role as presidential spouse.

Part of the burden, some feel, lies in the title of a presidential spouse itself. Is this role truly a role or an identity? Should president’s spouses be known as first lady, president’s spouse, or simply, by her name? The answers are complex. According to one spouse, it is “not an erasure of identity” (Cooper, 2007, p. C3); likewise, some presidential spouses view themselves as a president’s spouse, and the role is merely one part of her identity, nothing more or less (Oden, 2004, p. C2). Finally, and possibly the most overt action toward defining the role of a president’s spouse, Arkansas State University System interviewed its presidential candidate, including the presidential spouse, asking the wife about her view on her potential role as the president’s spouse (Krimm, 2010).

While there is no clearly defined role of the presidential spouse in either the university or community college world, both systems have one thing in common—it is a role that carries responsibility, and for some, it carries great responsibility. The question

that still remains unanswered is how the role of the male spouse is described. This study aims to find the answers to that question.

Limitations of Previous Research

Previous research on the role of the presidential spouse, particularly the female community college presidential spouse, set the groundwork for this study. However, this study sought to fill a gap in the previous works by providing research-based findings on the role of the female community college presidential spouse.

The last study on the role of the female community college presidential spouse was completed in 2001; therefore, the most relevant research related to this study is 10 years old. The same research, however, serves as the crux of this research. Since 2001, studies have focused on various aspects of the female community college presidency, such as leadership styles, pathway to the presidency, and barriers to female leaders in the community college leadership positions, but none have focused on the role of the spouse. The studies since 2001 that have focused on the role of the male spouse have been focused on the 4-year institutions or universities, not community colleges, meaning the research base is skewed towards university spouse experiences. In addition, these studies were not solely focused on the male spouse. They were studies that involved both male and female university spouses. While these studies are beneficial, the community college and university worlds are very different. University spouses often must contend with the presidential home and fundraising. This is rare in the community college world.

Limitations of Previous Studies

Many of the recent findings are editorials, opinion pieces, or advice books; scholarly research is not a being presented. While these works may serve useful for presidential spouses and presidents, they do not provide a true measure or description of the role of the female community college presidential spouse. Previous current and relevant literature on the role of the female community college presidential spouse exists on a limited basis. What does exist is dated and mainly anecdotal in nature. Therefore, this review of the literature has proven there is a gap to be filled regarding this role.

Summary

This chapter outlined existing, relevant research related to the role of the female community college presidential spouse. Chapter three addresses the process and procedures utilized to conduct this study.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Procedures

Chapter two provided the historical context and relevant research related to the role of the female community college president's spouse. It also addressed gaps in the research and mentioned limitations of previous studies on this topic. This chapter outlines the methodological approach and structure that was utilized to conduct this study, and begins by describing the research design, sample description and selection, data collection procedures, and ends with the data analysis process.

Because this study was concerned with the spouse, president, and boards of trustees member's own frame of references regarding the role of female community college presidential spouse, the research design was qualitative in nature (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Rooted in the assumption that reality is socially constructed, qualitative research seeks to gain insight and understanding of how people experience the world (Glense, 2006; Willis, 2007). Bogdan and Biklen (1982) define qualitative research as "an umbrella term to refer to several research strategies that share certain characteristics. The data collected has been termed, soft, that is, rich in description of people, places, and conversations, and not easily handled by statistical procedures" (p. 2). In order to investigate the role of the female community college president's spouse, I addressed the following questions:

- 1) How do male spouses describe their roles?
- 2) How do female community college presidents describe their spouse's roles?
- 3) How do members of the boards of trustees describe the role of male spouses?

Research Design

This study followed the qualitative research design known as interpretivism. Interpretivism rejects the positivist notion that everything can be researched empirically (Willis, 2007). The goal of the interpretivist research “is an understanding of a particular situation or context much more than the discovery of universal laws” (Willis, 2007, p. 99). In other words, the environment and the participant’s subjective reality, which is shaped by the world at large, must be taken into account (Willis, 2007). The essence of this study was to understand the role of the female community college presidential spouse, an ordinary person in a particular situation; therefore, the interpretivist approach created an appropriate framework to study this particular phenomenon.

The nature of qualitative research can be subjective, and therefore does not lend itself to generalizations. The participants in this study are individual spouses in unique circumstances, married to a female community college president. The study sample is not representative of all female community college presidential spouses; therefore, this study is limited to these particular spouses who may or may not represent the female community college presidential spouse as a whole. However, findings can serve as the catalyst for future research on this topic.

Description of Study Sample

The units of analysis, also known as the sample (Merriam, 1998), for this study were the female community college president’s male spouse, female community college presidents, and members of boards of trustees from five comprehensive community

colleges throughout the Southeast, Southwest, and Northwest regions of the United States. Fifteen individuals, five from each sample group, participated in the study. This was not the initial sample population sought for this study.

Originally, only spouses, presidents, and trustees from North Carolina were invited to participate in this study. The North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) is comprised of 58 community colleges where all college presidents report to an appointed board of trustees (North Carolina Association of Community College Trustees, 2009). At the time of my dissertation proposal, 14 (24%) of the 58 college presidents were female, and 11 (79%) of the female presidents were married. Eighty percent of North Carolina Community Colleges are rural community colleges (Carnegie, 2010), and all 11 married female presidents lead a rural college. On average, these female presidents closely represented the average female community college leader, and as a sample selection, these particular female community college presidents were similar in regards to college type and service area, creating a homogenous sample (Lewis, 2003).

In addition to securing participants in North Carolina, I wanted each group of participants to possess several characteristics. I sought to interview female community college presidents who had been in their current presidential role for at least one year and who had been married for at least two years. I selected these criteria for two reasons. First, the one-year mark should allow enough time for the role of the spouse to develop. Second, I wanted the president and spouse to be able to talk about life both before the

presidency and during the presidency, assessing if there has been a difference. There was on only one criterion for the spouse; they needed to be males. I wanted trustees who were directly involved with the selection committee that hired the current president and/or trustees who hold a board position where they work closely with the current president. Unfortunately, the sample did not meet all these characteristics. Below is an outline of the steps taken to secure the sample population for this study, highlighting differences from my proposed population.

I created and disseminated an initial contact letter (Appendix A) via email to the 10 female community college presidents in North Carolina. Due to a retirement since my dissertation proposal, there were 10 instead of 11 female presidents. The letter outlined the study and requested the president's consideration to participate in the study. I followed up each letter with a phone call to the president's assistant. Several assistants requested I send them a copy of the email and letter I sent the president, and I did so.

After a week, and only one response, I called the president's assistant at each of the remaining nine colleges. One call yielded success, with two out of ten presidents willing to participate. A week later, I heard back from another president who declined to be in the study. I sent out another round of emails as a follow-up to the initial email, including the initial contact letter. I also followed-up with each president's assistant via phone. A week later, and still no additional responses, consulted my committee chair and methodologist regarding a different approach to invite more presidents to participate.

At the suggestion of, and in consultation with my committee chair and methodologist, I purposefully selected an additional five female presidents, their spouses, and members of boards of trustees to invite to participate in this study. These women were selected based on their marital status (one female president married her current spouse several years into her presidency), geographical location (various regions of the country), and my committee chair's insight about whom he thought would be willing to participate in the study.

I emailed and mailed the updated initial contact letter (Appendix B) to the five presidents. I also had the opportunity to speak with several of the presidents at a national conference. I was able to introduce myself and let the presidents know they would receive a request to participate letter very soon. Four of the five presidents responded to my email and letter. Three agreed to take part in the study. One declined because she noted her husband has very limited involvement with her presidency, but she very graciously offered to speak with me if I had any questions.

Each of the presidents confirmed their willingness to participate by also indicating their husband was open to being in the study, and the presidents agreed to find a trustee member who would be willing to participate as well. As a result, I did not have to invite husbands or trustees to take part in the study because the president handled making sure I had willing participants.

Once I secured the participants, I started scheduling interviews. I worked with both the presidents and assistants to secure dates, times, and locations of interviews at

each institution. Due to travel schedules and work events, in some cases the president or president's spouse, and in some cases mine, I ended up conducting eight interviews in person and seven interviews over the phone.

Procedures for Data Collection and Instruments

Data are "rough materials researchers collect from the world they are studying; they are the particulars that form the basis for analysis" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 73), and can occur naturally or be generated (Lewis, 2003). For the purpose of this study, I employed both types of data collection.

Naturally occurring data allow a researcher the ability to investigate a phenomenon in its natural setting (Lewis, 2003). In this study I unitized one type of naturally occurring data, field notes. Field notes allow the researcher to create "the written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experience, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in qualitative research" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 74). Throughout the interview process, I took field notes, noting both verbal and non-verbal cues from the participants. For example, I would note such things as inflection or tone of voice. I also noted if there was a brief hesitation before the interviewee responded to a question. The field notes were coded at the end of the data collection process and incorporated into the overall findings of the study.

Unlike naturally occurring data, generated data require participants to reprocess their experiences and verbally share their interpretation of those experiences with the

researcher (Lewis, 2003). This study incorporated two different generated data approaches: individual interview and biographical methods.

Individual interviews were utilized in order to gain insight from all the individual participants (male spouses, female presidents, and boards of trustee members) in this study regarding the role of the female community college presidential spouse. As previously noted, interviews took place both in-person and via phone. In-person interviews included seven participants: two spouses, three presidents, and three trustees. Phone interviews included seven participants: three spouses, two presidents, and two trustees. Each in-person interview took place at the college in which the interviewee is affiliated.

Prior to each interview, participants were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix C) acknowledging their willingness to take part in this study. Participants who were interviewed in person reviewed and signed the form before the interview started. Participants who were interviewed via phone were emailed the form and asked to review, sign, and fax the consent form back to me prior to their interview.

Each interview consisted of a series of questions (Appendices D-F) related to the role of the female community college president's spouse. For this study, I incorporated open-ended questions in order to create a conversational dialogue with participants. Merriam (1998) suggests usage of this method when little is known about a phenomenon, as is the case for the role of the female community college presidential spouse. In addition, the interview questions were semi-structured, meaning when

appropriate I was at liberty to add follow-up questions. For example, when an interviewee answered a question, and I felt there was more insight they could share about that particular response I would say, “Can you tell me a bit more about?” Interviews lasted anywhere from 20-60 minutes in length with the average trustee interview lasting 30 minutes while the average spouse and president interviews lasted 45 minutes.

At the start of each interview I collected biographical data on each interviewee (Appendices G-I). Biographical methods allowed me to collect basic information on each participant, which was used in the data analysis process. It also allowed me an avenue to break the ice and create a positive rapport with each participant, prior to dialoguing about what, at was times, was very personal information about the participant’s life.

The interview questions were developed over the course of much research and reflection. I based the questions on my review of the literature as outlined in chapter two, prior interactions and conversations with both college presidents and their spouses, and my own natural assumptions about the spousal. I piloted my first set of interview questions with a current community college president’s spouse. Although female spouse, I felt that she could speak to the general roles of a spouse. Her comments, feedback, and suggestions helped guide the creation of the final interview questions for each sample population.

Data Analysis

Because qualitative research is not an empirical approach, the researcher must be “concerned with the accuracy and comprehensiveness of data” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 44), so, through the process of data analysis, an accurate picture of the phenomenon observed is illuminated. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1982), data analysis:

Is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other material that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others as well as working with the data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others. (p. 145)

Each interview was transcribed in order to analyze the data collected throughout the interview process. Then I read each interview transcription a minimum of two times. Next, I incorporated my field notes into each transcription. From there, I started the coding process. Coding involves studying the interview transcripts, field notes, and documents in order to find certain words, phrases or thought patterns (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). This process guides the researcher’s quest to make meaning of the data by helping the researcher categorize her findings.

I employed the coding process that I was taught during the early stages of my graduate studies. This method is often referred to as dumping, clumping, and naming. I

used this method for each group of transcriptions (spouse, president, and trustee). I started by printing each interview transcription. I cut up each interview, keeping questions with their respective responses. I physically taped each paper strip, question and response included, up on an office wall. Next, I started to rearrange the cuttings by similar responses or topics. This is known as the clumping portion of the coding. Once I was happy with each clump, which took me several different attempts to finally feel I had the data grouped accordingly, I began to name each clump. I did this for each group of participants. Because not all participant groups were asked the same questions, the named groups varied.

Initially, I identified 24 named groups (Appendix J), which I started to think of as my themes or spouse roles. From there, I began looking for commonalities between each theme or role, which allowed me to create a second and more cohesive description of roles and themes (Appendix K). Finally, I started to see clear patterns emerge, recognizing even more connections among the second grouping of roles and themes. After much reflection and rearranging, six major themes emerged as to the role of the female community college president's spouse: Overall Support Role, Life Before the Presidency, Role Expectations, Public Life Role, Private Life Role, and Impact of the Presidency (Appendix L). Every one of the initial 24 roles falls under the umbrella of one of these major themes, and in some cases there is crossover. A detailed discussion of the research findings and themes is provided in chapters four and five.

Throughout the coding process I triangulated the data, meaning a comparisons and contrasts of interview transcripts from all three groups of participants was incorporated to make sure the findings were consistent and not subjective in nature. This affirmed the level of trustworthiness of the data collection and analysis.

Summary

This chapter outlined the design and implementation processes and procedures I incorporated to study the role of the female community college presidential spouse. Using a qualitative, interpretivist methodological approach, this study allowed me to capture the story of the male spouse as seen through the eyes of male spouses, female community college presidents, and boards of trustees member. The following chapter tells that story by presenting the findings from the data collection process.

Chapter Four: Results

Chapter three provided a detailed overview of the research design and methodological approaches employed to conduct this study. This chapter will present the findings of my examination of the role of the female community college president's spouse.

Context of the Study

After hours of coding and recoding the data, finally reaching a point where I felt I had a good grasp on the findings of this study, I was then left with the question of how best to present the data. Because chapter four is intended to provide the results of the study, I felt the three over-arching points I must address regarding findings and results were participant demographics, the research questions, and the themes identified. With those three guiding questions in mind, I elected to structure Chapter Four into two main sections—participant overview and themes identified, leaving the research questions to be fully addressed in Chapter Five. Prior to each of the two sections in this chapter, I provide the rationale I used to organize and structure each individual section.

Participant overview. Due to the personal nature of this study, I debated at length on how to represent the demographic findings from the data collection process. Should I create an individual profile and alias for each participant? Should I provide a table outlining characteristics of individual participants including such information as race, gender, age, length of presidency, college location and size, etc.? Should I create a narrative telling the story of each presidential couple?

In the end, I went with none of these options. I weighed the pros and cons of the approaches listed above, and I then decided the best approach was to create a profile of each sample group, rather than providing any personal, identifiable information of any one participant. I came to this decision for several reasons.

First and foremost, everyone who participated in this study was very gracious with providing very personal information, particularly the presidents and spouses. The participants did so with the understanding that they would not be identifiable in this study. In order to protect their identities and still feel comfortable using the rich data I collected, I decided that creating a profile of each sample population provided me the most flexibility to comfortably present my findings.

Additionally, because this study is concerned with the spouse role from the perspectives of spouses, presidents, and trustees, I wanted the ability to present the findings in a variety of formats. For example, in some sections I provide findings from each of the individual sample groups. In other sections, findings are represented by the presidential couple only, because they were the only ones asked about a certain topic, or it was simply the most logical way to report the results. At other times, the findings paint a picture, rather than just simply presenting results. Creating profiles of each sample group gave me freedom to best tell the story of the male spouse. Outlined below are the spouse, president, presidential couple, trustee, and institution profiles.

Spouse profile. The spouses in this study range in age from 45-73 with an average age of 59.8. Each spouse is older than his wife. All of the spouses are male and classify themselves as White. All of the spouses are high school graduates, and the range of their educational attainment varies from some college to post Master's. The spouses have worked in a variety of fields including higher education, secondary education, military, business, and construction and development. Currently, one spouse is retired, two are semi-retired, one is self-employed, and one is a stay at home dad. None of the spouses are compensated for their role as a presidential spouse.

President profile. The female presidents in this study range in age from 43-63 with an average age of 54.2. Each president is younger than her husband. Four of the five presidents classify themselves as White, and one president classifies herself as Native American. The presidents either hold a Ph.D. or Ed.D. in educational administration or educational leadership. This is the first presidency for all but one of the participants, who is in her second presidency. The presidential terms range from one year to 15 years with the average presidential term length being five years. The pathway to the presidency varied for each woman. Their backgrounds include, but are not limited to, prior experience in elementary and secondary education, higher education, and the business world. Only one president advanced to the presidency internally, meaning the other four presidents relocated to become a college president. Each president reports to a board of trustees.

Presidential couple profile. Four of the five presidential couples were married before the wife became a college president. The one president who was not married to her current spouse at the time of taking office was married to another individual when she became president. On average the couples have been married for 13.8 years. For four of the five couples this is their second marriage. All of the presidential couples have at least one child and in some cases several children and grandchildren. Two of the couples have a child under the age of five at home. Four of the presidential couples relocated in order for the wife to accept her current presidency. One presidential couple is in a commuter marriage, meaning the husband and wife do not reside at the same residence on a fulltime basis.

Trustee profile. The trustees in this study range in age from 58-71 with an average age of 66.2. Three trustees classified themselves as female, and two trustees classified themselves as male. Three trustees classified themselves as White, and two trustees classified themselves as Hispanic. The educational attainment for this sample group ranged from high school graduate to master's degree. Two of the trustees are currently employed. Three trustees are retired and/or community volunteers. The trustees have worked in the non-profit, government, private industry, and small business sectors. The average length of board service is 11.8 years. The trustees have all served as board chair during some point of their tenure with the college. The trustees hold both elected and appointed trusteeships.

Institutional profile. The institutions represented in this study range in size and location. They are comprised of community colleges in the Southeast, Southwest, and Northwest regions of the United States. Based on the Carnegie Classification system the colleges range in size from small to very large, are located in rural and suburban areas, and are either single-campus or multi-campus institutions.

This section outlined the participant and institutional demographics of the study. The next section will present the findings of the examination of the role of the female community college president's spouse.

Findings

This portion of the study provides the findings of my exploration into the role of the female community college president's spouse. This section is intended to only paint the picture of stories and insights as told by spouses, presidents, and trustees. The analysis of this picture is provided in chapter five. The findings are grouped into seven major categories:

1. Life Before the Presidency
2. General Involvement with the College
3. Role Expectations
4. Public Life Role
5. Private Life Role
6. Impact of the Presidency
7. Miscellaneous

These sections correspond to the themes that are outlined in the next chapter, providing a framework for which to present the results of this study.

General Involvement with the College

In order to get at the heart of a community college presidential spouse role, I started each interview with very general questions, leading up to more specific, concrete situations and examples. After collecting demographic data on a participant, one of the very first questions I asked was how involved is the spouse with the college. I asked for general information only, noting that I would get to specifics later in the interview. While I viewed this approach as a way to frame the interview, I discovered during the data analysis process, this question generated responses that spoke very directly to the spouse role. While this first section of the findings will speak to that general involvement of the spouse, each of the subsequent sections, while more specific and detail-rich, fall under this very general overview of the spouse role. Hence, I found that the role of a community college president's spouse is to be supportive, and how and in what ways that plays out at each college and for each couple really is in the details and specifics noted throughout chapter four.

When asked about their general involvement and role with the college, each spouse used the word support or supportive in his response. Ranging from "taking care of our three-year-old" to "attending social events" to "just listening to her" were all noted as ways in which spouses said they support their wife, and indirectly that is the spouse's general involvement with the college. One spouse commented about his role, "I

attend a lot of functions with her and go to a lot of programs the college has to offer. It's all in a supportive role." Another spouse noted he is not on any boards, nor does he volunteer at the college, but he goes to events with his wife. This particular spouse said because he and his wife have a young child, it does limit his involvement, and that when the child is older he might become more involved with the college. However, another spouse said his involvement with the college is his volunteer work. The spouse who is in a commuter marriage said his presence at events is limited due to the fact he and his wife are not always in the same location. He indicated at current time, his involvement with the college is to be a good listener to his wife and provide advice when asked. Overall, all of the spouses talked about attending events at the college, just being there for their spouse, and doing whatever they can to support their wife. One husband spoke philosophically about his role in saying, "My wife in her role is as much a part of me as I am of her."

Presidents reiterated much of what their husbands said about spousal involvement with the college. While being supportive and attending events were most often mentioned as general roles, presidents cited several different examples of how their spouses do this. One president said her husband does all the "typical event stuff" and that his main involvement is "being at any event I need him to be" but he also, "takes classes and stuff. This is an interesting aspect so he can give me a student perspective." Another president said her husband is involved with the college in "an indirect, but extreme way." She said that he is her confidant and that she is able to share

with him what is going on at the college. She noted the importance of this because, “In this position you don’t have people that you can talk to.”

Trustees confirmed the overall role is to support his wife so she can do her job, and beyond that, they do not see or expect any additional involvement. While there was mention of attending events and parenting, in the cases where the presidential couple has a young child, trustees noted anything beyond supporting the president is and should be voluntary. One trustee’s take on the spouse role encompassed what all of the other trustees described as well. She stated,

He is very supportive of his spouse, and because he is in the realm of education, I think he understands what she is going through. Other than that, he really does not play a role. She pretty much runs her own show, and he is very supportive of what she needs, time wise and socially.

The general involvement of the president’s spouse is being a supporter. Each of the following findings speaks to the specifics of how that role is executed.

Life Before the Presidency

“I wouldn’t be sitting here doing this job if it hadn’t been for him. He has always encouraged me.”—President

Just as the presidency does not happen overnight, neither does the role of the presidential spouse. Spouses and presidents spoke at length about the decisions and choices they made as individuals and as couples that supported the wife’s pathway to the presidency.

Educational support. Several of the presidents and their spouses spoke about the husband's support of the wife's educational journey. One president talked about the fact that life got in the way during first attempt at earning her doctorate. When she was at a point where she was ready to return to graduate school, her husband said to her, "Okay, you can go back, but you can't quit." They talked about what going back to school would mean for the family, and he said that he "could help with the child, with the home, but he wouldn't go to the grocery store; He hated grocery shopping." She laughingly said that he "did the first part, and he didn't do the second part." As a result, she was able to go back and successfully finish her degree.

Another wife spoke about taking time off after completing her Master's degree. Her husband wanted her to take some time away from school. She commented about the life of a graduate student. "As you know, there are a lot of sacrifices, a lot of time, a lot of missed birthdays and anniversaries. People are off watching football, and you've got your head in the book." So she agreed to take a year off from school. She was back working on her Ph.D. eight months later. While not what the couple had agreed on, she said her husband was "totally supportive." The husband confirmed this noting that the timeline got pushed up, but it was indeed "best for his wife and her career." He said his job has always been to support her educational pursuits.

Yet another president said without her husband's support she is not sure how she would have made it through graduate school. Not only was she in college in a different

town during the week and had taken on a new position at work, but the couple also had a very young child at the time. She explained,

My husband pretty much rearranged his whole work schedule so he could move with me while I was getting my doctorate. Being in this job with a basically a toddler, that is what has changed his role a lot. His flexibility with his work, if we didn't have that, I am not sure how I could juggle all the pieces.

His career and location changes, for her career. For many of the couples, career changes and relocating have been inevitable as the wife worked her way to the presidency. While not always easy for individuals, much less couples, participants spoke about how this played out in their relationships.

When asked whether he had to change careers or leave behind a career to support his wife's pathway to the presidency, one spouse admitted "not knowingly." Due to several life events including the downsizing of the company he worked for early on in his career, and his wife continuing to pursue her education, it just made sense for the couple to eventually make relocation choices for her career, which was advancing at a greater rate than his. Both husband and wife agree that was not always the plan, but at some point, "it just made sense for our family." When the couple had a young daughter the husband became a stay at home father. The wife explained,

After the baby was born, I said I don't want to put the baby in daycare. He opted to be a stay at home dad and has been at home with our daughter ever since. He has been very flexible. He has changed his path. She will eventually go to school,

and he'll go back to work but we are not in any hurry. He has made a lot of sacrifices—absolutely.

The husband sees their decision as what is best for the couple and for their family.

Ultimately, they are both doing their individual parts for the greater good. He commented,

We have strength. She has a very good strength and leadership, obviously. She is very well educated, and my strength is in service and servitude. Not to say that she is demanding in the running of the household, but she makes it easy for me to support her knowing that her career will go much further than mine would have gone...She is doing everything that she can for our family, and I am doing the same thing.

For another couple, relocating and often times living apart has just been a part of their relationship. Because both the spouse and president are in higher education, they understand it just comes with the territory. Both husband and wife noted that the husband has often relocated to work at institutions within driving distance from his wife's college as she has moved up the career ladder. Unemployed now and semi-retired, the spouse said he would "come out of retirement so fast it would make your head spin," if offered the right opportunity. But the market is tough, and the opportunities are limited within driving distance of his wife's current college. The wife said her husband has adjusted, but this scenario is something future presidential couples should consider, particularly male spouses. She explained,

I think from a woman's perspective, if the roles were reversed and the couple was younger, the wife would have opportunities to be involved with the children at school to the community or the church. I think from the male perspective, often times a male values who they are from that the job they do. In just watching my husband, being unemployed, he has had to become comfortable being without a job.

There was still a learning curve for the one couple that did not relocate when the wife became president. The wife spoke about the fact her husband has always been supportive of her career, but,

When I got involved with the college, I think it was a different aspect for him because he is self-employed. He has a lot more flexibility. When you are part of a large organization like this that flexibility is different. There is a lot more commitment. He is supportive of everything I do, but it changes, being this committed to a job, being in this role... The commitment is much different and the expectation, and he has just gone with that.

When her husband was asked about how he supported his wife's pathway to the presidency, he said, "She works hard, and she works full throttle so it's like, that basically is how I support her in her career. I am patient with her and let her get her business done." He went on to say he made some business decisions, such as selling a company a "bit sooner than planned" as a way to support his wife's career, adding that

combination of a young child and the presidency played a role in that decision as well.

He is now able to work from home.

For the one spouse that married his wife during her presidency, he is willing to relocate should his wife want to pursue another presidency. His wife agrees this is much in part due to the fact their kids are grown and that her husband is retired. She noted that earlier in her career when she was married to another man, her then-husband agreed to move for her career. He had two requests with regards to relocating, a smaller community and a warmer climate. The president said she managed to find both. Her then-husband had a transferable career, and she said that was part of the reason they were able to relocate, noting that he “never defined himself by his career, so it worked out good. I think if we’d both been driven it would have been more difficult.”

Overall, the husbands have made career changes and moves to support their wives’ pathway to the presidency. Husbands and wives agree that it is not always easy, but often times it is what it takes to reach the presidency.

The search process. The search process is where there is a clear divide about the involvement of the presidential spouse. It is not a question whether or not there is a role in the process but rather is this role formal or informal and to what degree does the role impact the selection of a president. The spouses, presidents, and trustees all view this differently.

Spouses and presidents agree the role of the spouse in the search process starts from the beginning stage when a president is contemplating entering a presidential

search. All husbands and wives noted that before any application was ever submitted for a presidency, there was a conversation and agreement between the presidential couple in order to ensure both parties were comfortable with and supportive of the decision to pursue a particular presidency. They also said that the acceptance of any presidency was a family decision as well.

Spouses and presidents also agree that it is important for the spouse to be involved in the search process, and while the majority of the searches did not involve the spouse in a formal manner, many trustees did have an opportunity to spend time interacting with the presidential couple prior to the selection of the president.

The informal involvement of the spouses in the selection process varied from researching colleges and communities to helping out with the application process. One president noted that during the process,

I would always let him read my letters. It's always good to have other eyes look at it. They did that DVD process here where we had to make a DVD. Did he tell you, he was the one reading the questions? That is the only reason I got the job. It was my husband doing a really good job of reading the questions. He was very supportive throughout the process.

A spouse, who was not invited to any formal events, sat in the audience at each of his wife's campus visits in order to get a "read on the faculty and staff." He listened and watched as his wife answered questions from the audience and then gave his wife feedback as to how he thought the crowd was "responding to her and her responses."

Due to the fact no one at the college knew him and the college was large, he said he was “able to slip in and out without anyone knowing that I was not just another faculty or staff member.”

Another husband said his most critical role during the search process happened when his wife was up for two presidencies at the same time. When she was offered one of the presidencies, she had to make the decision to accept it, meaning she would have to withdraw from the other search. Ultimately, after much discussion and prayer, he and his wife came to their decision. She wanted the presidency she was offered, but she would not accept it without another visit to campus, this time with her husband. The search committee chair, also the Board chair, agreed and offered to fly the family out for a final visit. During the visit, the presidential couple explored the community and had dinner with the search committee chair, his wife, and several other trustees and their spouses. The president noted this is what “sealed the deal” for the couple, and she would have never made such a “major move” as accepting a presidency and relocating her family without trustees meeting her husband. She was adamant that it was important for the BOT to see how she interacted with her husband and noted, “You don’t understand me, if you don’t understand me with him.”

In another search, the spouse was invited to attend a community gathering with his wife during the final stage of the selection process. College faculty and staff as well as trustees and community members attended the event. Following the meet and greet function, the president and her husband had dinner with several trustees. The president

noted that she felt it was extremely important for people, particularly trustees, to meet her husband. She was quite impressed that the selection committee took the suggestion of the search firm to include spouses in the search process. The president was also involved in three other searches during that time where her spouse was not invited, and she questioned the selection committees' decisions not to do so. She commented,

As a board, I think you do want to see what that spouse is like. Is it a good match because you are going to be doing things as a couple? Is it somebody who is outrageous or outlandish?

Yet another spouse said that “absolutely” it is important for the spouse to be involved in the search process, yet his official involvement with the selection process was very informal. He was not invited to campus when his wife interviewed, but when two members of the selection committee came to visit the presidential candidate at her current campus, the committee members did meet her husband. Both he and his wife picked up the committee members at the airport and then had dinner with them later that evening. According to the spouse, “I suppose I passed muster. I don’t think I made anybody too mad.” While all the spouses and presidents noted the importance of the spouse in the search process, the trustees see things a bit differently.

When trustees look to hire a president, whether male or female, they do not see it as a two for one deal, but they agree a little bit of window-shopping never hurts. One trustee explained, “We were hiring one person, not a family. But, we certainly did not want to exclude the family.” More directly, the trustee members maintain the

involvement of the spouse during the search process should be one where the spouse determines if he is willing to relocate and be supportive of his wife if she is selected for the presidency. A trustee explained this by saying someone advised her to, “Check out the family members...It is a big obligation to take this on, and you would want their family to be supportive...We were definitely considering that as a part of the package.”

This sentiment was expressed during each trustee interview. While they are very clear that their job is to hire the college leader and that is what they focus on, there is some consideration of the spouse. However, all noted it has never been a make or break issue for them. Their main concern as a board is will the spouse be supportive, followed by will he successfully make the adjustment to a new community, in cases where the husband relocates as well. My first thought during the interview process was how do you find this out if there is not an expectation of the spouse to be involved in the search process? What I quickly learned is that each college has their own approach.

A trustee who said the spouse is a non-issue was very quick to note that they did invite spouses during the final round of the search process. He said,

We wanted to make sure that the spouses came and looked at the area where they were going to live and make sure they were satisfied...Would they be willing to come here, live here, and learn what the community is about?

When asked if it would raise red flags if a spouse that was invited did not come with his wife, he said “of course,” and that it is even more important in the case of a female presidential candidate and a male spouse. He commented,

I think it is a little more important if it's a male spouse that is coming because the woman follows the man in 90% of the cases. The man is the breadwinner and the spouse follows. This is not just for presidents... To me, it is easier for the woman to follow the man than it is for the man to follow the woman. They need to come to the realization that if the woman is going to be the main breadwinner, they need be supportive of her.

Another trustee outlined a different approach completely. Spouses were not invited to participate in any part of the interview process, but the selection committee did "due diligence" by utilizing Google to research potential presidential spouses. He went on to note that the committee was not looking for a type of presidential spouse but rather looking to make sure they were not hiring a president who had a spouse the Board might "need to manage." He made sure to point out that the Board hires and oversees only one person—the president. Yet, he continued on to tell me a specific example of what one Google search revealed.

There was a candidate who through research I read about. I read about her husband making public comments at some function that had to do with things that were going on at the college, and he wasn't working there. It had something to do with her. Flags went up with me. What in the world is he getting involved with that for? It is something I don't want any part of.

The one situation that varied from the onset of the selection process was where the president was an internal, single candidate for the presidency. However, the trustee noted that even if the president had been an external candidate, she doubted there would have been much spouse involvement. The trustee noted that she was involved with the hiring of the previous president, and the “former spouse was not involved in that selection process either.” The trustee did explain because the presidential couple was known in the community, she and other trustees were quite familiar with the husband and very comfortable with how we would support his wife in the presidency, so there was no reason to talk to him. Looking to the future, she the Board should consider involving the spouse in a more formal manner. This is in no way related to the current president’s spouse but rather the result with a local school official’s spouse and her lack of adjustment to the community. She spoke about the situation and how tough it was for the entire community, saying that selection committees “should find out more about the spouse” because it is a big investment for the community when they hire someone in that type of position.

Overall, with the exception of the above-mentioned board member, trustees are very comfortable with the lack of formal involvement of spouses when it comes to the selection process, yet they do want to know that a spouse will be supportive of the president in her new role. Spouses and presidents think the spouse should be involved during the search process. They see the involvement as a way for the selection

committee to learn more about them as a couple and how the couple interacts, which presidents think the Board would want to see before selecting the leader of the college.

Expectations of the Presidential Spouse

“No, I am not throwing a holiday soiree.”—Spouse

Questions asked about the expectations of the presidential spouse were based on the literature review findings that traditionally presidential spouse spent a great deal of time planning and hosting events, often in the home, and working closely with the president’s assistant. This section outlines participant responses to questions about such activities, as well as providing additional insights into trustee and president expectations of the presidential spouse.

Entertaining. The spouses in this study do many things to support their wives, but entertaining and planning parties do not make the list. More importantly, no one expects them to do so. Unlike the spouses of years past, this once traditional role has not transcended into the present. Catering is the name of the game today, and interestingly, it is the females once again deciding on the menu. This time though, they are the presidents, not the president’s spouse.

All five of the spouses concurred that they have not been asked to plan any events, and when there is a function at their home, their role is to be gracious and serve as a co-host alongside of their wife. Two spouses noted that events are typically catered and planned by their wife. These same two spouses also confessed they help out by just staying out of the way and being nice to guests. One spouse did note that during his

wife's previous presidency he "put on a couple of barbeques." He went on to say that entertaining was more of an expectation during that presidency evidenced by the fact his wife was provided an entertainment fund and a country club membership.

The presidents all agree that their husband being a great co-host is more important than planning or preparing for an event. One spouse noted since her husband cannot cook it is by far more important for him to be nice and be the "great conversationalist that he is." And while he does not do any of the planning or cooking, "he is great with the clean up at the end of the night."

While neither the president nor spouse feel any expectation from the Board or community for the spouse to event plan to the degree that was once expected of the presidential spouse, the presidents say that it is not always easy to pull off such types of functions when they do take place. One president, who is also in a commuter marriage, described this when she said,

I joke with my husband. I've told him before that I need a wife. Sounds a little awkward but all of those things that I don't have time for. Entertaining is hard when you don't have someone at home during the preparation or cleaning the house or doing the grocery shopping or cooking. It is very difficult when you are working fulltime. I don't have the time to do that, even get the preparation on the weekends cause I am playing catch-up.

Another president expressed this same sentiment as well. Due to life circumstances and some “major weather mishaps,” she and her husband have yet to have an official event at their home. She is not concerned that the Board is worried, and she thinks they will gladly come when invited. But she says, “I am not going to be baking cookies because I don’t have time.”

So what happens in cases where the husband is not doing the planning, the wife does not have time, and the show must go on? One president says the answer is her assistant. She described a situation traveling with the Board that involved arranging both day and evening events:

There are things with getting together for dinners or making sure everyone is meeting, and there is an expectation that I should be handling that. It’s not an expectation just because I am a woman but I am in charge. It’s hard to do that so I took my secretary to kind of coordinate all those things.

Trustees were very adamant that there is absolutely no expectation for the spouse to entertain or event plan. More to the point, they said it would not make a difference if the spouse was female. One trustee said because the spouse does not have an “official role,” there is not, nor should there be, an expectation of the spouse in that regard. Several of the more experienced trustees spoke to the fact the role of entertaining has not ever been an expectation at their respective colleges. One trustee even cited the lack of expectation of the previous president and his wife explaining, “He never did that. His wife never did that. It was just something that was not part of his presidency.”

Working with the president's assistant. Traditionally, spouses have established working relationships with the president's assistant. Often times these relationships involved planning events and the coordination of the president's calendar. So, I was curious to know if present day male spouses have any type of relationship with their wife's assistant since spouses, as evidenced by the previous section, are not event planning. What I learned is that some spouses work with the president's assistant but not in the traditional way that previously defined that relationship. For other spouses, they have nothing more than a cordial, non-working relationship with their wife's assistant.

One spouse noted that his wife's assistant is his "saving grace" in that she provides him a monthly calendar of where and when he is supposed to be somewhere. Both he and his wife agreed this is working much better than the system they were using when the wife first became a president. His wife says it helps because "he doesn't have to deal with me." Early on in the presidency, the couple recognized that not going over her calendar was becoming a source of stress for the both of them. She commented, "I would tell him when he needed to be somewhere. He wanted to be asked to go." The wife said certain events, which are outlined in more detail in another section, are non-negotiable. She said, "I have to go. You have to go. It's not a choice that I have." As a result, the couple has found balance in the president's assistant keeping track of all the "have to attend" events and making sure the spouse knows when and where those events take place. The spouse commented about the assistant and the working relationship he has with her:

She is great. She knows that I'm not anxious to being in the front line, so she try's to get me out of whatever she can. Every month she emails what my obligations are for that month. She is super with me and my wife.

Today, the spouse has access to his wife's daily calendar, but he does not check it. Since he knows what events he needs to attend, he now spends his evenings talking to his wife about her day, which is what he would rather do than "talk about the next upcoming social event."

Another spouse who works closely with his wife's assistant said it has more to do with the fact he and his wife have a toddler than anything specifically related to the presidency. Her husband jokingly said, "My wife never takes my calls." As a result, the spouse utilizes communication with the assistant to make sure he has immediate access to his wife. Typically, he needs to connect with his wife to "let her know something or get input about our boy." The president explained how this works for she and her husband,

He has my assistant's phone numbers, and she has his. If he is needing to call me about something and can't reach me, he knows to call her. He will call her at the office, and she knows to track me down. He will text her or something, and she will follow up. They have access to each other. They need it because he needs answers on things, and I'm not always there. He knows he can call. The problem is that when you are in a meeting, you can't just leave and answer the phone. So he knows to call her.

The other three spouses have a much less formalized relationships with the their wife's assistant. The said they directly contact their wife when needed, and they do not involve the assistant. They also work directly with their wife regarding calendar issues and event details. One spouse commented while he does not work with his wife's two assistants, he does know how they "take their coffee." He and his wife both mentioned the fact that the spouse will often pop in to bring his wife a latte, and he brings drinks for the assistants as well.

Overall, each spouse spoke very highly of his wife's assistant. Regardless of the type of relationship between the spouse and the assistant, each spouse assured me they know if they ever need to connect with their wife at any point during the day, the assistant is always there to make sure that happens.

Trustee expectations. One of Vaughan's (1987) suggestions for boards of trustees was to determine their expectations, if any, of the president's spouse and make sure those expectations are clearly communicated to the president and spouse at the onset of the presidency. He went on to note the lack of clear expectations can be a source of stress for everyone. When participants were asked whether or not the Board had any expectations of the president's spouse and if those expectations were communicated, the responses were consistently no and no.

Trustees were clear that there are no expectations of the president's spouse. In most cases, trustees noted the issue has never been discussed among board members. More over, they agree there is not even the slightest implication that the spouse should

in anyway involved with the presidency. While one trustee said, “you always hope for the best when it come to the spouse,” all the trustees agree it is not in the realm of their responsibility to have any expectations of the president’s husband.

Presidents concurred that they do not feel any expectations for the Board with regard to their spouse’s involvement, yet sometimes the wives have their own expectations of their spouse. One president expressed early on she thought it was important for her spouse to get to know the board members and their spouses, so she wanted he husband to travel with her when he could. She followed up saying the board did not necessarily have that expectation. She commented, “I don’t think, in fact I know it isn’t [an expectation] because they don’t pay spouse travel.” She went on to say if it was the expectation, funds would have been provided.

A different president said while it was not discussed with her or her husband, “I know the expectation or my belief was that he needed to be involved in these community activities and needs to be at college and foundation events.” Her spouse spoke to this directly when he said,

They have never talked to me or anything, or but I do go to the Board functions, you know, and stuff where other spouses attend...They didn’t really talk to us about how I should be or anything like that. My wife pretty much has the say so on that.

Husbands also said no trustee has ever spoken to them about any expectations, nor to their knowledge has a trustee had that conversation with their wife. One spouse

said there was talk about his getting involved with “some community organizations” when his wife first became president, but he did not indicate that it was an expectation. The trustee from that college spoke to this as well saying, “We really just wanted to know what his interests were. We know he is retired. His time is his. We do not expect anything from him, but we certainly do enjoy his company.”

Public Wife, Public Life

“I understand, as a spouse of a wife who is in this profile and might be more in the public eye or in the paper than others, that if I was to do or say something, it would reflect on her and the college. That is understood. That is probably an unwritten expectation. I don’t want to be a Lindsay Lohan.”—Spouse

When talking with husbands, presidents, and trustees one theme that continued to emerge is that if you have wife who is in the public eye, you need to be prepared for a life in the public eye as well. Participants were asked several questions related to the public life that comes along with being married to a community college president. Outlined below are some of those findings.

Living logo or living logos? Spouses, presidents, and trustees all agree the president is the living logo of the college. Beyond just leading the college, people see the president as the main representative of the institution. One trustee noted that he feels most people see employees of the college as just working there, but the president not only works at the college, she represents the college as well. He commented, “It is kind

of like one of those things where you can never not represent the college. You cannot go somewhere and say I don't have on my president hat today."

Presidents are very much aware that they are representing the institution at all times, even when not of official college business. One president said,

I do know that I'm not just sitting there as my husband's wife and having a nice dinner out. I'm sitting there with the college draped all over me. I get that. I understand that, but it wears sometimes.

A trustee responded that being a living logo is important, but not when it comes to the "surface view stuff" such as what someone "looks like or what they wear." Interestingly, the president of that college spoke about those same issues with a different point of view. She indicated that representing the college does get at the surface level stuff as well. She asserted,

I do not feel like I could go to Wal-Mart in my jeans, t-shirt, with a hat on. Now, have I done it? Yes, but I am scooting through the garden center, getting what I need, and getting out. You always feel like you have to be dressed. It is a 24 hour, seven days a week job. You are always on. I don't know if that is a living logo but I just know what I'm saying and how I look and who I'm with is always being evaluated.

A president from another college spoke to this as well noting that she doesn't care as much as she once did. She said she goes out to the store wearing her ball cap or putting on make-up explaining she just doesn't care as much as she once did.

I think part of that is also my age. I think if you are 30-40 and in a presidential role, there is a side to it. When you get to this age you start to do things that you just don't give a hoot if they don't like. Your self-image is much more firmly grounded. You are more self-assured. I think that comes with age.

Being a living logo though does go beyond what one is wearing and how one looks.

Several spouses spoke about certain behaviors and how others in the community might view those behaviors. One president noted that she enjoys a glass of wine with her meal every once in a while; however, as "a woman of faith" she recognizes some people might see her with a glass of wine and take issue with that, noting that she has to always be aware of her surroundings and her choices. A different president summarized what everyone expressed about life as a president and always having to remain thoughtful about that role:

I think that is where you value and ethical systems come into play. Whether you are at a party for a social drink or not, you always have to be aware that someone is watching you especially in today's world of technology. You never know if someone is taking a photo of you with a cell phone. I'm always one to believe that you should be on your best behavior when you are out in public. You are representing the college.

With regards to being a living logo and living a public life, one president shared with me a very intimate look into what it was like losing a husband, grieving, moving on to date, and then meeting and marrying her current husband all while being a community

college president. Because of her public position, the community was aware when her first husband became ill and later died, meaning they watched her go through the grieving process as well. Once she started dating again, she said there was not concern or interest about her dating life from the Board or community other than just wanting to see her happy after suffering such a great loss. When she first start dating her now husband she invited him to attend college events with her. She shared the very funny progression of how she introduced him to faculty, staff, and administrators at the welcome back get together each semester. She said he went from being introduced as her friend the first semester, to her very good friend, to once they got married being introduced as just my old man.

While there was a consensus that the president is “most definitely” a living logo, responses were mixed when participants were asked if that falls to the president’s spouse as well.

It is clear that the president represents the institution at all times, participants were divided regarding if and to what extent the spouse represents the college. There is a fine line between representing the college and not embarrassing the college. When asked about the president’s spouse representing the college, there was not a clear consensus. While some spouses, presidents, and trustees said the spouse does indeed represent the college, other spouses, presidents, and trustees said the spouses do not represent the college. The middle ground and most reported answer was that while the spouse

represents the college a lesser degree than his wife, that representation is really about not embarrassing the college and/or his wife, which is not quite the same thing.

One spouse was clear that he does not represent the college stating,

I don't feel that I really represent the institution because my role has nothing to do with the institution. I keep most of my opinions to myself about anything at the college. Don't express them because that is not my role in anyway associated with the school.

He went on to say that he wants to reflect well on the college whenever he and his wife go out, but he is not a living logo. On the flip side, another spouse said he does feel like he represents the college, even when out golfing with his friends. A different spouse said because he does not live in the community where his wife is currently a president, his role in representing the college is limited. He went on to state that if he lived in that community he would be involved with different community organizations, being more in the public eye and representing the college. The other two spouses said they feel like they represent the college to a degree, but it is mainly when they are out in public with their spouse.

Presidents are mixed as well when it comes to their spouse representing the college; however, each president's response aligned very closely with what her husband said about his role in this regard. For the president in the commuter marriage she noted that "because of my husband's limited exposure here, he has not had the opportunity. Most of the public recognition is because of me." The wife of the spouse who said he

does represent the college agreeing, “He absolutely represents the college.” One president captured the middle ground when explaining while she is always draped with the college on her, for her husband it depends on the situation.

I think in some regard he does, but I think if I got up from the table, no one would even know who he was...He is probably draped if I’m sitting next to him. If he goes to the golf course or takes our daughter to the store, unless someone knows who he is, he is free to do whatever he wants as long as he doesn’t get arrested.

Another president spoke to the middle ground as well, noting that it has more to do with not embarrassing the college than representing it. She commented,

I think he is a little more conscious that he lets on sometimes...Mainly not so much that he’s out there representing the institution, but I think, if anything, I am always saying ‘just whatever you do, just don’t embarrass the institution’, which is different than representing it.

Trustees mostly agree that the spouse does not represent the college, though he can be a reflection on the institution. As a trustee commented that maybe in a minor way the spouse represents the college stating, “In other words, don’t get arrested for public drunkenness and things like that. But in terms of what they wear to the grocery store and things like that, I don’t think it matters.” One trustee even said of the spouse representing the college, “I don’t know if we would like that. We are more comfortable with the way it is.” Additionally, another trustee said should the husband engage in some

“ill behavior,” there would be a need to discuss it with the president. Though the trustee noted he had no concerns of that ever happening, he is not sure it would reflect on the college, which is his main concern. He said, “It might be bad for her image, not necessarily bad for the college.” He continued to say it really is about the president, not her spouse. “We judge her, the board does, as for the job she does and how she represents the college outside as well as here.”

Public events. Part of representing the college for a president is attending social functions on a regular basis. For the spouses in this study, that role falls to them as well. Presidents and spouses agree, not only do the spouses attend public events with their wife, but also it is important for them to do so. Once again trustees do not expect that of the spouse, but agree that is something the presidential couple has to workout between the two of them. They agree it is nice to see the husband there, but they do not expect it to happen, nor do think it reflects on the president should the spouse not be at certain events.

Spouses, whether they want to be there or not, agree there are certain public events or functions they feel they should attend to support their wife. Some spouses attend every event at the local performing arts hall to graduation, while others attend functions on a limited basis. These events may also include but are not limited to foundation functions, chamber of commerce functions, local non-profit functions, and trustee related functions. The one constant for all spouses is that their wife determines what functions the spouse “needs to attend.” One spouse noted, “I go to the ones she

says I have to go to.” Another husband said his wife “decides on what is important and what I should be at. I just go ‘okay.’ I’m fine to do it and a lot of it is fun, but there are other things I would be happier doing.” However, for some couples life circumstances dictates the amount of events the spouse can attend.

With a young child at home, two spouses said it is hard to attend everything. One couple said they try to take their child whenever it is appropriate to do so. The spouse also noted however that the entire community knows they have a young child, so “If I’m not there, they figure I’m at home with the boy.” The spouse who commutes back and forth said that because he is not always with his wife, when he is in town he has decided, “Whatever you want me to do, I’ll be there.”

In addition to going to events when asked, or in some cases told by their wives they need to be there, every husband agreed it is important to be there by their wife’s side. As one spouse noted about attending public events with his wife,

Oh sure, it’s a lot of fun but at the same time, it is very important. It shows a different side of her because in her role with the college, she is the figurehead. She is my girlfriend and my wife, first and foremost, so I am extremely proud of her, not to mention the fact that she is the mother of our child. That supersedes any of that other stuff. Yeah, I’m happy to support her.

Presidents said their husbands are correct; there are some events and functions they want and expect their spouses to attend with them. Several presidents spoke to the fact while these events are often social in nature, they are still work. This “social work”

is a big part of the presidency, and wives want their husbands to be there and to support them when they can.

As one spouse noted, “Absolutely, it’s very important. That is truly business, not about pleasure. It is about connecting. It’s about my professional responsibilities and he is a part of that.” She went on to explain how at a yearly military event, her husband is able to “connect with those guys. That is a good thing. We connect with people in different ways.” Another president explained that her husband is of great help to her.

First of all, he loves talking to people, so he’s a very good extension, outreach for me. That spreads the involvement far greater than I was there solely by myself. A lot of times I tend to be focused on whatever’s on the program, the logistics of that sometimes don’t really have the time to interact. And he’s got a tremendously good memory for names, details it just amazes me.

For another president, she said when in town, her husband typically comes along with her, but she “leaves it up to him.” She noted she is quite comfortable attending events by herself, but when he is there and attends she thinks he enjoys it. “He enjoys meeting the people I work with. He hears their names at home. It’s kind of nice for him to connect a face with a name.”

Presidents also mentioned that having a toddler impacts what events and how many events the spouse attends. One president in particular said that over the last year and a half she and her husband have “gotten more selective of where he is at.” She went on to explain,

I can be gone four nights a week at things and again with our life and having a toddler, that doesn't make sense and so we have been very—we are more strategic on where he needs to be. If I'm gone four nights a week, there are pretty busy weeks two weeks in a row, he may only go to one of those events. I am more selective on doing that when I know what board members will be there. Board members don't go to everything that I go to but we are strategic about where he needs to be involved. I don't think, I don't think they really, as long as I'm there, most of the time it's okay. It just becomes, if he hasn't been to some things I know is a high profile event, we try to do that, but he can't do all the things that I do.

All but one of the trustees indicated they have no expectations nor do they care if the spouse attends events with his wife. One trustee confirmed, "To me, it does not matter. I think it matters to her. As far as the board is concerned, no." Another trustee said, "He frequently accompanies her. If he doesn't it is not a problem...She works good enough for us, we're not going to press cause he's not there too."

For the one trustee who says it is nice when the husband attends social events with his wife, and "in this small community it would be strange if she appeared at social events without him," she does note that it really is at the discretion of the presidential couple, and as a trustee it is really none of her business. She went on to express that there are certain events he should not attend. "She speaks a lot, he's not there. It is her

invitation to speak. Staff meetings, cabinet meetings, trustee meetings, he is never there. It is not appropriate.”

Explaining her opinion as to whether or not the president’s spouse should attend events with his wife, one trustee compared the situation to that of a local business owner. She indicated that people are often curious about local business owners, just as they are curious about the college president. She said that can fall to the spouse as well, noting there is one major difference though, “people are going to enroll here regardless of if the spouse comes to an event or not.”

Identity. Spouses and presidents were asked several questions about the husband’s identity as it relates to his wife’s job. Their responses overwhelmingly revealed that while proud of his wife and her career, the husbands in this study are not defined by their wives’ presidency.

None of the spouses have an official title such as “first man” or “first gentleman,” which sometimes is the case for female spouses. Only one couple reported a case of mistaken identity, explaining that when introduced to someone for the first time, it has been assumed the husband rather than the wife is the college president. Both the husband and wife say they laugh at such happenings, but the wife noted,

It doesn’t bother us. That is just a stereotype that everyone has. I think it’s funny, actually. It will be nice when that doesn’t happen, when women reach a state where that is not automatically the first think you think about. It is just part of the journey.

Similarly, the couple also said the husband is often referred to by his wife's last name, which is not the husband's last name. Other couples with different last names said this happens to them as well from time to time.

In addition to mistaken identity, participants were asked if any of the spouse's personality identity was tied to his wife being a president. Once again, there was not a clear consensus. When asked if their husbands would define himself as a "presidential spouse" or "someone who just happens to be married to a president," every president said with a great deal of confidence that her husband sees himself as someone who just happens to be married to a president, one president even stating, "I don't think he sees himself as a first husband or anything. I think he just sees himself married to me." Spouse agreed with this sentiment. One husband said, "I'm someone who is married to a college president, it just happens to be that way. Now I am very proud of her, and I encourage her, but no I am not defined by that." For the one spouse that said he does see himself as a presidential spouse, more direct follow-up questions revealed it has more to do with the fact he is proud of his wife and her accomplishments than it does with his own personal identity.

Public Wife, Private Life

"As far as the daily things, I take care of the house. I do the wash. I do the ironing. I do the cleaning. I don't cook but I do the cleanup. I do the bills.

She doesn't have anything else to worry about except for her responsibilities at the college."—Spouse

One of the most interesting sections of Kintzer's (1972) guide to being a good community college spouse discussed how the president's wife should always have a home-cooked meal waiting for husband when he arrives home after a long, hard day at the office. So, I was curious to know if the husbands in this study were culinary experts, or at the very least ordering take-out. I learned that the presidents have husbands who are handling much more on the home front than deciding what's for dinner.

Presidents and spouses admit home life has changed since the presidency. As already noted, the presidency is a job that requires much time, energy, and effort, leaving very little extra time. However, there are certain things that still have to be done—cooking, cleaning, getting the oil changed, etc. These things do not stop. Both husbands and wives spoke to the fact the men are doing their best to make sure things on the home front are taken care of, so it is one less thing for a busy president to worry about at the end of a long day.

For one couple, life is not all that different though. Because he was already retired when he met his wife, one spouse said he took on many of the home responsibilities early on in their relationship because he was not working. Both he and his wife said handles most everything, except the cooking. Whether a result of the presidency or just how their relationship worked out due to the fact her husband is retired, the president said, "I don't do anything around the house. I really don't. I acknowledge him. I am really grateful to him. He really does everything. I truly only cook a little bit."

For one presidential couple, the presidency coupled with having a toddler has changed how the couple manages issues at home. The husband said, “I pretty much handle everything. She’ll cook occasionally, but I try to cook when we’re staying home.” His wife agreed saying when it comes to larger gatherings at their home, she still handles most of that, but on a day-to-day basis most things fall to her husband. Her husband admits she had more free time before becoming a president.

She wasn’t always on the go though we didn’t have the boy then, but she was able to come home and cook supper. I pretty much handle everything now, and she just mentions what she would like to have change in the house, and I get it handled.

His wife agreed; she really has very little time to do certain things she once did. Prior to the presidency, she always handled the bills. She spoke of the support her husband provides with regards to their home.

There is a lot more he is handling on the home front from the standpoint of personal finances, the home, those kinds of things. He may organize things a little differently on that but the big thing is the personal finances and just paying the bills. I used to always do that. He does that whole role. If there is anything that needs to be done at the house with repairmen, I don’t have time for that. He has that whole role. And having a toddler that does change things too. When I’m out of town, or I can be gone in the evenings, I think I end up managing those events much differently. There are times when you just make an X through the

room, make contact with people and then leave. I think I do that a little bit more now. For me, the hard thing is when you are traveling, there will be times and that adds a different burden on how you manage the home front. That responsibility goes to him to do those things.

For the other couple with a toddler, the fact the father is a stay-at-home dad dictated a shift in home responsibilities. The husband notes it is not a “big deal now,” because it is his responsibility.

I am not working and we have our daughter, that falls on me to make sure that the house runs, that there are groceries, that people are fed, that cleaning gets done, and if I need to subcontract some of that stuff out whether I hire someone to help with the cleaning or whether or not we are going to have a meal because I don't feel like cooking, that is what we have to do.

His wife echoed his sentiments noting that the shift happened because of the baby, not because of her job. She said, “We have a shared-deal.” She went on to describe that deal. “If you are going to be home while she is napping, he can get some chores done. In some regards, I don't do those things.” The couple agrees this is working great for them now, but the husband will eventually go back to work, and that is when it will become tougher. The husband said, “Who is going to do that stuff? You are really going to have to seriously look at subcontracting... We'll cover those bridges when we get to it.”

Rather than have all the burden of maintaining a home fall onto her husband, one president said she hired help. She said her husband tries, but she did not want all of that to fall onto him. She explained,

I hired a house cleaner that came in a couple of times a month and did the cleaning. He would do the grocery shopping, bless his heart. That would help even though we didn't do much eating at home. Nothing has changed...His workload is minimal.

Even with a minimal workload her husband says it is still a division of work, and he is more than happy to do his share.

It'd be pretty coarse of me to expect her to come home and prepare dinner, you know? I have the capability of doing it. It's a reversal of roles from contemporary, but I don't think I have a hard time adjusting to that at all.

Confidant vs. advisor. Because the only major study that has ever looked at the role of the female community college president's spouse looked at whether or not female presidents seek out their husband's for advice, I felt the question should be asked of participants in this study as well. I discovered that spouses look to their husbands as sounding boards, even if sometimes the husbands sneak in a piece of advice every now and again.

Spouses reported that their wives are mainly looking for a sounding board at the end of a long, stressful day running a community college, and for the majority of the spouses, they say they know their role when it comes to this. One husband noted,

I'm more a sounding board, unless she specifically asks me for something, which is very rare because she is so competent. Plus, I don't want to offer my opinion. That is her stuff. I don't know the details, and she may not be asking my opinion. I'm pretty much a sounding board and let her decompress. I don't have the expertise of running the college or anything like that. I stay as far away from handing out advice as I can.

While another spouse stated,

I'm a sounding board – we get together at night when she gets home and we'll discuss – especially bad days and stuff. She does ask my opinions or I give my opinions of about what I think. I've never been a president and she never bases any of her decisions, I'm sure, on what I say. We do discuss. It's kind of a way for her to vent and to get rid of the stress. It helps me stay connected. I know what is going on, and I think it has worked well. I don't pretend to be able to solve any of her problems. I will give what I know or what I think I would do, but then it is up to her but I'm sure she doesn't base any of her decisions on my thoughts. She is pretty good at going where she needs to go.

One spouse did say he acts as both advisor and confidant. He sees both roles as a way for his wife not to “implode.” He said in her type of leadership role there is just so much going on that she needs someone to just “walk through different scenarios.” He said his advice comes mainly in the form of “getting her to step back” from the situation,

and while he does provide advice, he was quick to note, “I don’t have any power to dissuade her from her decisions, nor do I try.”

Several spouses said they came to their confidant role by trial and error. Early on in his wife’s presidency, one spouse said he did give her advice but because he comes from the business world, he understands it may not always translate to the education world. Now he just listens to her problems rather than trying to solve them. Another spouse said he has quite simply learned to never ask his wife how it is going. “If she wants me to know how it’s going, she’ll tell me.”

Wives see their spouses as sounding boards as well. A president noted that she and her husband have nightly conversations about her day. She laughed that it is “almost ritualistic.” He asks about her day. She tells him, and the conversation is almost always the same, because her workdays involve lots of meetings. She also laughed when explaining why she does not ask her husband for advice. “My husband is very, very talented when it comes to anything that has to do with his field, but he doesn’t know a thing about running a college. So why would I ask him for advice?” Another president pointed out that if her husband had a career related to her work, citing an attorney as an example, she said she might ask for his advice, but because her spouse’s field is so “vastly different” from higher education, she said he really is just a sounding board.

One president cited two very different reasons for not seeking advice from her husband, and it is a “rare occasion if she does ask for advice.” Simply put, she said, “He doesn’t get paid to do this job. I do.” In addition, the president said that at the end of the

day, “I don’t want to go home and keep talking about it...I love this place, but I don’t want to talk about something I’ve been talking about all day. I try to respect him too.”

Trustees were asked if they had any insight as to whether or not the presidents seek out their husbands as either an advisor or confidant. They were also provided with a follow-up question asking if they particularly cared one way or another regarding this matter.

Overall, trustees do not know how presidents and spouse communicate in this regard, but regardless, they trust their president. One trustee said,

I will tell you that me being the only female on the board, I was probably a little less supportive of her to start with than most of the guys. I was probably a little harder on her. After seeing her in action, I would totally trust her judgment on it. If she felt comfortable with that, I would have no problem. I know how she thinks. I know how her mind works, and she is not going to do anything that would negatively impact the college.

Trustees also think whether or not the spouse is a sounding board or advisor probably has more to do with “just how the couple communicates.” One trustee’s response encompassed the notions expressed by all trustees when she explained:

I want to say, I want my president to stand on her on. We didn’t hire the spouse. We hired her. I know that my husband came home a lot, and we talked about a lot of things. I would be just a sounding board, so he could figure things out for himself. He would go back and do whatever he need to do, but I never knew

what that ways. But that kind of good relationship I think is valuable...It depends on the relationship itself. How many years did you know the person before you married them? What was your relationship like before hand? What world of work are/were you both in? Those kinds of things.

Pillow talk. Kintzer (1972) advised that the successful presidential spouse would know and understand how to utilize discretion. Current spouses, presidents, and trustees all agree discretion still remains one of the better virtues a president's spouse can practice.

As discussed in the previous section of this chapter, the president, at times, shares with her spouse happenings and situations at the college. As a result, the president's spouse may have intimate knowledge of the college, and this knowledge should never be discussed with anyone. One spouse commented, "The pillow talk incident—no. I may not throw our comments because I don't know the whole situation because I am not the one that works for the college, so I cannot comment on that." There is indeed a clear understanding from the spouses that what ever the presidents share with them does not go any further. One husband said, "I pretty much don't say anything to anybody about her true feelings. I know how she is and what she would expect of me. I don't talk about this to my friends." Yet another spouse says there are two friends he can share stuff with regarding his wife and his wife. He was quick to note that these are lifelong friends, and while he can trust them, he certainly is not out talking to his golfing buddies about his wife and her job. If asked he said his standard response is,

“everything is fine, and she is just working hard,” noting even if everything is not fine, he would never say otherwise.

A final spouse said he does not share “stuff with the college” and credits his wife because “she does not share stuff with me that she should not share.” He went on to explain she does share “everyday stuff” but it is never “anything that I should not know.” One spouse though, summed up what the spouses overall said about pillow talk: “There are things that she has said to me that I know that it does not to any further than me. If she cannot trust me, who can she trust?”

Wives described much the same when it comes to sharing information with their spouses and their spouses’ abilities to utilize discretion. Wives also agree there are just certain issues and information about the college that spouses should not share with anyone. One president stated, “There is a confidential piece about being able to talk openly between us that is important.” And while some presidents have not ever had a specific conversation regarding what is public versus private knowledge, one president stated, “I do not think we have ever had a really direct conversation about that, but I just know that he has the innate sense to know that.”

A different president credits her husband’s background in higher education and his understanding of the fact that you “have to be guarded.” Even so, there are times that she is “very guarded” with what she shares with him, not because he does not understand or would ever intentionally share information but she does not “like to put that burden on him, and you never know what might slip.”

Several wives noted that while their husbands “get that college stuff is private,” sometimes they do not share stuff with their spouses because “it is just so complicated to try to share it,” and at the end of a long day leading the college, “it is just so tiring to share.” Beyond sharing work related issues, there are times the president or the presidential couple may be dealing with the personal issues that should not be shared with the public either.

One president cited the example of undergoing medical testing for high blood pressure. She stated, “I go and get tested, and we don’t talk about those things because you don’t want the public to know that kind of personal stuff about you.” She explained that “things can grow so quickly in this role, that I had not ever thought of from a personal standpoint.” Her approach has been to stay constantly guarded and aware. “It is a different level of awareness in what you share about yourself personally and about everything.”

Trustees were also asked about the amount of sharing that may take place between the presidential couple and the spouse’s ability to be discreet. According to one trustee, “The ideal situation is the spouse is the best friend, and that is where it stops.” She continued to explain that being “loose in talk where comments could get back to the community would not be appropriate,” noting that a spousal comment could carry “some other repercussions. It depends on the who, how, and what was said.”

Another trustee said that confidentiality just comes with the role of being the spouse of a public leader. He stated:

Any time the other person is in a leadership position, whether it is a college president or the President...Michelle Obama cannot be talking about Hilary Clinton being a witch. That should not go over wall. She [Michelle Obama] knows that. She may think it, but shed knows she cannot say it.

Additionally, trustees noted there are some issues the president should not share with her spouse, and there are certain times and situations that the president should keep to herself. One trustee noted of such issues “the president probably needs to be able to talk and be open with her board members and them with her.”

Husbands, wives, and trustees agree the president’s spouse should utilize discretion, and there are even times when the president herself should utilize discretion regarding what she shares with her spouse.

Impact of the Presidency

“To have a wife who is a first time college president but to then have a daughter who falls to cancer or who is struggling with cancer that is unfathomable. My husband’s biggest stress is me. What he will say is different but he wants to take on everything he possibly can so I don’t have to and so that I am able to do the job. He wants to do it all. That is his stress. He wants to make sure dinner is on the table, and I’m not worrying about x, y, and z. I think part of that is so I’m able to be a mom when I walk in the door and be a wife at 8:00 at night for an hour.”—President

The impact of the college presidency can be far reaching. It is not a nine to five job that ends when the office doors close and everyone else gets to go home. For many presidents that marks the start of the second shift of their presidential duties. Night hours are often filled with dinners, board meetings, and community events. As a result, the hours, let alone the mental strain of running a college, can take its toll on not only the president but also even the president's family. When asked about the overall impact of the presidency on the presidential couple's relationship, participants shared a variety of experiences with each couple telling their own individual story.

For one couple the presidency has just been "another experience that we shared with one another." Both partners agree their marriage has not changed much since he was retired when he met his wife, and she has always been developing her career. They said the impact was lessened as a result of the location where the wife took a presidency. Because the husband already had friends in the region, he was able to make a smooth transition, which both noted made all the difference. Overall, the husband and wife said it has been an adjustment, both good and bad at times, but noted there has been no real impact to their marriage.

Another couple expressed similar notions. The husband said there has been no impact other than the fact his wife is "very smart, very driven, and very goal oriented," and he said that is why she is a president, not the result of the presidency. His wife thinks her presidency has been good for them as a couple, but she was a president when she married her husband, and her only comparison is from her first marriage. She said

the impact there was much greater, noting the family moved twice for her career advancement. She commented, “Moving is hard. You leave behind friends. You have to find a new job. It takes time to become established in a new community.”

The other couples said the impact, while not necessarily a negative one, of the presidency has been far greater for them. It should be noted two of these couples have a toddler at home, and one couple is in a commuter marriage; therefore, the circumstances are very different for these couples.

When asked about the impact of the presidency, for two couples, it is hard to know where the impact of the president ends and the impact of having toddler begins. As one husband said, “Throw a baby in the mix, and it changes everything.” He explained that changes have occurred since his wife has become president.

Yeah, I think so, especially since we had the boy. It gives me, I know that I have to be home anyway to take care of him. I usually get him off to daycare school. I pick him up, and I take him to the doctor. I guess I do those kinds of thing I never had to do before. I pretty much take him everywhere, if something happens. Taking him to swimming lessons, I guess that’s part of the change, we used to do a lot of that together, and it’s a lot easier if I just handle it myself and let her get her stuff done at the college.

He went on to say that while it is hard at times, because his wife has “such a tough job,” their son is what keeps the couple “solid.” He said no matter how busy his wife is “she is still very involved with the boy.” His wife agrees, there are positive and negative

impacts of the presidency but it very much “balances itself out, but it depends on what is going on.” A president commented on her situation:

I work all the time, and they get cheated. That is something that you have to try to work through. You know it going in, and then when you have a small child, and you decide to do it, that is a decision that we made.

The presidency, combined with a commuter marriage and an age difference for one couple, has impacted their relationship. Some of these are factors the couple have dealt with before as this is the wife’s second presidency. Still, it can be an adjustment at times.

The wife explained:

To be honest, it has had an impact on our relationship. There are commitments that I have, longer hours working, and with him being at the age he is, I think there are times he would like to go do things and be retired. He knows I still have a professional career and commitments here. I think that would most possibly be the only impact that I see with my career on his life that I’m still working, and I have quite a few years to work. I’m real open to that. That is a balance in my life when I can come home and ask him what he’s been up to. It really is a good stress reliever for me. It takes my mind off my job.

Her husband sees it much the same way explaining that previously he has always been able to find work when relocating for his wife’s job. That has not happened yet, so he is still residing at their previous home. He commented about the impact of the presidency:

I think it is something you have to work at. It does not come easy, and it doesn't come automatic. It is one of those things you constantly have to work at. And, both parties have to work at it. Not that we have not had our issues, but mostly our issues happen when I am not there because I am someplace else, and she does not feel she has a support system.

The good, the bad, and the neutral. In addition to the overall general impact of the presidency, husbands and wives agree there are certain aspects of the presidency that can bring the president's spouse both pleasure and stress, but overall the impact "evens itself out."

Husbands agree they take great pleasure and pride in their presidential wife and her ability to lead a college. One husband said of his wife, "Oh, I am so proud of her because of what she is doing and what she has accomplished, and how smart she is, and how well regarded she is in the community and state." He went on to say he is also proud of her in "the opposite role, which is just being my wife." Another spouse spoke in a similar regard of his wife noting, "I guess...how important she is out in the community. Being at functions, how well respected she is....She's highly respected and just being there with her...how many people come up to me and just love her to death." One spouse said it is just watching his wife grow in her career and the wonderful job she is doing as a president that brings him the most pleasure: "She is beyond what I ever thought for her, and she is doing it...Not that I didn't expect it, but I was just very pleased."

For other spouses find pleasure and enjoyment is many of the opportunities afforded to them as a presidential spouse. One husband said, “I’ve met a lot of nice people and have socialized even with the governor. You rub shoulders with some interesting people.” Ironically, another spouse had this to say about the pleasure he receives from his wife’s role:

Maybe her role as a president has allowed us to do other things that we normally wouldn’t be able to do. I don’t want to say meet other people because I am not concerned whether I am meeting the governor or something like that. Maybe it affords us the luxury to go different places and see different things.

This spouse went on to say the financial benefit of his wife’s job is a plus. He said, “It betters our family because we are better able to provide for our daughter and our future.”

Wives also spoke about what they feel brings their spouse pleasure as a result of the presidency. One president jokingly said, “I would hope his greatest pleasure would be being married to me.” She followed by saying that her husband really enjoys “watching me and the activities that I’m involved with, and being there as a participant also.”

Several presidents said they think one of the greatest pleasures their spouse enjoys is the interaction with other people. A wife noted, “He enjoys the students. He enjoys seeing the students. Oh, he loves graduations.” Another wife said while her husband sometimes complains about all the events and functions, he really does enjoy meeting and talking to people in the community.

A different president spoke to the fact she thinks there is a sense of pride her husband has in being married to a college president.

I think there is a level of pride. I think when he is out with his buddies, they've been around the chamber and the city, and then they start making jokes about him being the president's husband. I think that is really—it's just fun, and there is a sense of pride in that.

One president spoke about the financial benefit of the presidency, echoing her husband's sentiments. While the president noted, "the money doesn't suck," even though she did not get a "very big raise" when she accepted the presidency, her salary does allow her family to have options.

Not everybody can make what I do and allow him to be home. I think the financial part of it, in order to be submissive to do what we think God wants us to do, that is the greatest blessing in all of it.

While both husbands and wives agree there is pleasure in being married to a community college president, the role of presidential spouse can also be stressful and trying at times.

When asked what is most stressful about being married to a community college presidential spouses had a variety of answers. For some spouses, their wife is their biggest source of stress, which I learned has more to do with their wife's commitments and obligations than the actual wife. One spouse who said his wife is his biggest source of stress went on to clarify:

I guess how she just tries to do so many different things is what stresses me out.

We just are involved in so many different things. As far as how busy she is at the school, she'll take on things at church. She'll take on things in the community, different programs. I guess her now knowing how to say no stresses me out.

Another spouse talked about the stress involved with helping his wife work through her stress. He spoke about the fact the presidency is not an eight to five job, and that getting his wife to "shut it off" can be stressful at times. He also talked about the lack of downtime, so there is never time for his wife to take a moment and just relax. He said that is what brings him the most stress, seeing her deal with the stress of the job.

Other spouses noted social obligations and scheduling issues as sources of stress. One husband noted that for him it is the numerous social obligations. "Some of them I'm fine with. We've been to some dinner parties that seemed they were never going to end." He went on to speak about how he was a "party guy years ago" but now, "I don't go to bed late, and I get up early, and I like my peace and quiet." A different husband said his wife's schedule can sometimes cause him stress, because it "might affect" his schedule, noting that it rarely happens but when it does, he has to work around her schedule.

The final spouse said the source of his stress comes from being a man and wanting to help his wife with her problems. He explained, "I suppose as a man I sometimes have a hard time not being able to fix her problems. There are men that are basically fixers, and if you cannot fix it, I don't know what to do."

Wives have a variety of answers as well when asked about the stress their job can cause their partner. Once again there was mention of the fact the wife is the biggest stress for the husband. One president said, “His biggest stress is me. What he will say is different, but he wants to take on everything he possibly can so I don’t have to so that I am able to do the job.”

Another president noted the biggest stress is that “it is always there.” She spoke about the fact even when you go away on vacation, “it’s always there,” noting the life of a CEO “is that you feel such a large sense of responsibility.” She indicated the stress comes in because her husband “knows how heavy that weighs on me, and I think that causes him stress.”

A different president countered her husband’s response confirming that he “doesn’t like going to all the social events all the time.” She went on to explain that because she and her husband live in a small community, they are often times at different events and functions with the same small group of people, and the lack of variety in people and discussion topics be trying at times for her husband.

Two other presidents said the stress for their husbands comes into play when husband and wife are not in the same location. For instance, one wife spoke to the fact she and her husband currently reside in different states. She said, “I don’t know if we have ongoing stress. I think the major stress for us right now is the distance that we have with him there and me here.” She went to say that even with that stress, him being back in their previous residence is allowing him to spend time on issues such as “selling the

house and arranging for closing” that if they were in the same location would not be an option for the couple. So the stress of being apart is balanced with the fact the husband is in a place where he can help alleviate other stress for the family.

The impact of the presidency can at times be good, bad, and neutral. There is great stress and pleasure in being a presidential spouse, but all participants noted it balances out in the end. One husband shared his thoughts: “It has probably strengthened us as a couple. The good and the bad, we get through it together.”

Additional Research Findings

The previous sections provided the findings of this study as related to the role of the female community college president’s spouse. Beyond these themes and roles, I did discover additional findings. While not necessarily prudent to the role of the male spouse, I did feel these findings were worthy of noting. They are outlined below.

The presidential spouse world is still a woman’s world. In some regards the world of presidential spouses is still very much a woman’s world. Several examples of this were noted during interviews with the participants. One couple both mentioned a recent community college president’s state meeting where spouses were invited to attend as well. There were two different agendas for the day, one for president and one for spouses. While the presidents were in various meetings throughout the day, the schedule of events for the spouses included shopping, a visit to the museum, and lunch at a local café. Both the president and spouse said they felt the events for spouses were very much geared towards and for women. The husband noted he would much rather play golf, but

that was not an option. He attended the events, and while he said he had an “ok time,” but he and his wife have agreed next time he will just stay home and play golf.

A trustee from a different college said that oftentimes when the president’s spouse travels with the college to events that trustees and their spouses go to as well, the president’s spouse is the only male. Another trustee noted the same thing, saying the president’s spouse and her husband are usually stuck with a group of women all day, referring to the trustee spouses.

Location, location, location. Several spouses and presidents made reference to the fact they think presidential life in a Northern and/or urban setting might be very different from their own situation. One husband even noted “having previously lived up North, the community college president was not that well known.” For him and his wife, in a small, Southern community, it is a very different experience. It is very much “*a big fish in a small pond*” situation. A president of a suburban college questioned whether the presidency would look and feel the same in an urban area, noting there would most likely be differences. Additionally, several of the participants from the Southeastern region of the United States referenced location when explaining or describing something during the interview. It was evident that most interviewees from that region felt the location itself impacts the presidency.

Faith. For one presidential couple faith was a dominant theme throughout their journey, both individually and together, and that weaved in and out of their interviews. While not related to the spouse role specifically, faith is very much a part of their lives

so it is intertwined in who they are and what they do. They both often referenced prayer, being where God has planned for them to be, and letting God lead them in their journey.

Much on the opposite end of the spectrum, one spouse spoke about the fact she and her husband do not participate in organized religion. She confessed, for someone leading a college in the Bible Belt, it was a daunting at first. Early in her presidency, there were many invitations extended to the couple to attend church. While the president noted she “never had any hard pressure about it,” she thinks people talk and people most likely want to know why they are not members of any church. So far though, no one has outwardly expressed concern or asked why they do not attend church.

Summary

This chapter provided the findings of my study of the role of the female community college president’s spouse. Chapter five will provide an analysis of the results, implications of these findings, suggest topics for future research as related to this study, and ultimately answer the question—What is the role of the female community college president’s spouse?

Chapter Five: Analysis

Chapter four presented the results of the study on the role of the female community college president's spouse. This chapter analyzes those findings and compares them to previous research on the role of the president's spouse, paying particular attention to Vaughan's and Smith's works where the role of the community college president's spouse was studied. In addition, this chapter will present implications and recommendations based on the findings and the analyses of the spousal role, describe the typical male spouse and his roles, and conclude with suggestions for future related to the college president's spouse.

Theme One: General Support Role

Analysis. Smith (2001) found male spouses play more of a support role in their wives' careers as compared to female spouses. Findings from this study confirm that as well. Additionally, this study suggests the roles a spouse takes on are merely ways in which the husband supports his wife and her presidency. The support role is an overarching umbrella under which every other spousal role falls. These roles vary based on presidential couple's relationship and life circumstances with some roles in flux while others remain constant.

Implications and recommendations. A male spouse should be prepared to support his wife's career in a variety of ways. This can include, but is not limited to, supporting educational endeavors, relocating if necessary, managing household responsibilities, and attending a variety of public events with his wife. If a man is not

prepared to support a woman in these ways, he might not want to marry someone who has aspirations of becoming a college president. Nor, should a woman marry a man who is not capable of or willing to support her in such ways that allow her to grow and develop her career. For the husband and wife who meet later in life, they should take this into consideration as well. Regardless of timing, location, or length of marriage, a male spouse is going to be expected to support his wife's presidency no matter how many or few roles he takes on.

Theme Two: Life Before the Presidency

Analysis. With the exception of the search process, previous studies have not spoken to the spouse's role before the actual presidency. This study found there are two additional roles that a male spouse takes on prior to his wife's presidency. The male spouse supports his wife's pathway to the presidency by supporting her educational endeavors and being open to changing or altering his own career path. For the man who meets and marries his wife after his own retirement and after the wife's completion of the doctorate, these may not be necessary roles.

Findings of this study also indicate the male spouse has a role in the search process though there is not a clearly defined consensus as to the formality and importance of this role. While the president and the spouse view this role to be of great importance, the average trustee finds the role to be minimal and not crucial to selecting a college president.

Implications and recommendations. The male spouse should be prepared to support his wife's educational endeavors. This could mean there are certain times when the wife is not only working but going to school as well. This may mean she has limited time for her husband and/or her family. Additionally, if an educational program has a residency requirement, it could mean the husband and wife do not reside at the same location for a period of time.

For the male spouse who works, it may be wise to consider a transferable career that is not location specific. Relocation is often required to advance one's career with several moves before reaching the presidency. Another consideration is whether or not the spouse is looking to grow his own career. For the presidential couple where both husband and wife are looking to grow careers and advance through the ranks, they should consider and discuss what that may potentially mean for their relationship. It is very likely that at times the couple will need to reside in different locations to advance their individual careers.

With regards to the presidential search process, the presidential couple should be prepared for very minimal official spouse involvement; however, the male spouse may be invited to campus with his wife. This will most likely be an informal situation where the husband and wife tour the community and/or have a meal with several trustee members. However, the presidential candidate should feel comfortable talking with the selection committee or the search firm about the level of involvement the college

expects from her spouse during the search process. She should also be prepared for any answer she receives.

If invited to attend either or both formal or informal events, the spouse should not overstep his bounds during these gatherings. He is not being interviewed to run the college. He is there to show support for his wife. If for some reason he is asked questions about the college beyond the general nature, he should quickly note that he is there to support his wife, and while excited to be by her side during the search process, she really is the expert and can address such issues.

Theme Three: Role Expectations

Analysis. Previous studies indicate there is one particular role the president's spouse takes on—entertaining. Smith (2001) found the male spouse has not continued that tradition, and that was revealed in this study as well. Gone are the days when the president's spouse event plans and entertains on a regular basis, at least for male spouses.

The spouse has traditionally worked with the president's assistant as well. Historically, the working relationship entailed planning the above-mentioned events and coordination of the spouse's calendar. The male may or may not work with his wife's assistant, and if he does so, it is on a much less formal basis.

Results of this study indicate any expectations of the spouse come from the president herself, not the Board. Trustees unanimously said hiring a married president is

not getting a “two for one deal.” They do not have expectations of the male spouse, as the college does not employ him.

Implications and recommendations. The president and her husband should be prepared to determine their own expectations of the spouse and his role. Because trustees do not have expectations of the spouse, the presidential couple has the luxury to determine the spouse role. However, the husband should be prepared for his wife to have expectations as to what that role will entail.

Additionally, even though the male spouse is not entertaining, and the president does not have time to take on such responsibilities, there is a certain amount of co-hosting the presidential couple will do at their home. The spouse should be gracious and pleasant to guests. He should also offer to help out pre and post event, if possible. This may include making sure the house is clean both before and after an event.

Theme Four: Public Life Role

Analysis. Smith (2001) found that the typical male spouse’s role regarding public life is escorting his wife to events and functions. This study yielded the same results also finding that the male spouse at times represents the college, and he should take special care not to embarrass himself, his wife, or the institution. Additionally, findings suggest the expectation of this public life role originates with the college president, not the Board of Trustees.

Unlike university presidential spouse who typically has an official title such as First Lady or First Husband, a male spouse does not have an official title. It is on the

rare occasion that the male spouse is mistaken for the president when the couple is introduced for the first time, indicating proper introductions are being provided and people do not automatically assume the husband is the president. Findings are mixed when it comes to whether or not the president's spouse's identity is tied to her role as president. Some spouses view themselves as a presidential spouse while other views themselves as someone how happens to be married to the president.

Implications and recommendations. The male spouse should be prepared for a life somewhat in the public eye with the main role of public life falling onto his wife. He should be prepared to escort and attend social and business events with his spouse. These made include but are not limited to foundation events, chamber of commerce events, and local community functions. When attending these events with his wife, the male spouse does represent the college. He should act accordingly, not speaking out of turn or behaving in such a way that would reflect poorly on himself, his wife, or the college. In other words, he should not get arrested or ever be intoxicated in public.

When by himself in public, the male spouse does not typically represent the college; however, he should still be aware that his behavior might reflect on his wife and ultimately the college. The same rules still apply—no public drunkenness and never get arrested. Additionally, he would be well served to create and maintain his own identity while still having a great sense of pride in his wife because he will not be known as the First Gentleman of the college.

Theme Five: Private Life Role

Analysis. The private life role is where this study contradicts Smith's 2001 findings on the role of the community college male spouse. Smith found the female president seeks out her husband for advice, which was different than Vaughan's 1987 study that found the male president seeks out his wife as a confidant. Smith concluded that not only is the male spouse a confidant, but he is also someone the female president turns to for advice on how to handle college issues. This study found the female spouse is no longer going to her husband for advice, but rather he is a confidant and confidant only. While he may at times give advice and on the rare occasion the president may ask his advice, the overall role the male spouse plays is to listen.

Smith also found that the average female president and male spouse split household chores and responsibilities 50-50 with each partner equally contributing to the maintenance of the home. This study found the male spouse handles the majority of responsibilities related to home life, with the exception of cooking. The typical male spouse in this study cleans, does the laundry, handles home repairs, and while he does not cook, is most often responsible for handling dinner plans.

Additionally, this study supports previous studies where by the president's spouse utilizes discretion when it comes to college matters. Findings suggest that at times the president there are certain matters, concerns, or issues the president will discuss with her husband. He should not discuss those matters with anyone other than

his wife. Findings also suggest there are certain issues the president should not discuss with her husband.

Implications and recommendations. The male spouse should be prepared to listen, handle household chores, and practice discretion. The female president will likely seek out her husband as a sounding board, and he should be a thoughtful listener, not an advice giver. The couple would be wise to set ground rules when it comes to such conversations. For example, the couple might decide that during the beginning of the conversation the husband will only listen, not offering his opinions or insights unless solicited. He should also be prepared to hold in confidence anything his wife shares with him related to the college. At the same time, he needs to understand there are certain college-related issues his wife will not share with him.

The male spouse should also be prepared to handle the majority of the household duties, making sure there is very little that his wife to attend to once she arrives home. If the male spouse does not work, or is a stay-at-home dad, he should be prepared to handle these issues himself. If the presidential couple is a dual-career couple, they may benefit by hiring someone to handle household duties for them. For example, it may behoove the couple to hire a maid, a gardener, and even someone to handle grocery shopping and meal preparation.

Theme Six: Impact of the Presidency

Analysis. When Kintzer (1972) said, “Very few professions make the demands on a man and his wife as that of the community college president” (p. 3), she was referring to male president and his female spouse. However, the female president and the male spouse in this study prove the same is true for them. The presidency carries great impact for not only the president, but the spouse and family members as well. Spouses, presidents, and trustees all highlighted the fact being a president is not just a job. It is a lifestyle, and it takes not only a great deal of time away from the home and family, but it is a very tasking job mentally. As a result, individuals and relationships are both impacted. The level of impact varied in this study depending on certain life circumstances such as having a young child and being in a commuter marriage. There is a far greater impact when the presidential couple is dealing with either of those issues.

The impact of the presidency resulted in changes for several of the couples, particularly the male spouse. The presidency at times means relocating, taking on additional responsibilities at home, seeing less of one’s spouse, becoming the primary caregiver of children, and attending public events. Individually, one or two of these changes may not mean an entire life change, but combining several of these changes together, and that can really change someone’s place in the world.

Implications and recommendations. The spouse and president alike need to be prepared for their lives to change when the wife becomes a president. Before applying for a presidency, the presidential couple should consider the possible life changes and

the impact the presidency might entail. They need to ask themselves as individuals and as a couple, can we handle this? Are we ready to embark on this journey together? Presidents and spouses would be wise to talk with current presidential couples about what to expect and advice for handling any changes that may occur as a result of the presidency. Additionally, the couple should have a pre-game plan so they are prepared to transition into a presidential couple.

The Typical Female Community College President's Spouse and His Roles

The typical female community college president's spouse is a White male. He is in his late 50s, and he is several years older than his wife. He is a high school graduate and has earned some college credits, if not a bachelor's degree. His wife possesses more formal education than he does. He is close to retirement having worked outside the home in a professional field. He is a father. While he handles many of the household responsibilities, cooking is not where he excels. He has supported his wife from early on in her career and continues to support her in her presidency.

The Good Male Spouse

Kintzer (1972) and many others have created and provided a list of attributes the "good" presidential spouse has. In that same vein I created a list of attributes and characteristics "the good male spouse" possess based on the findings of this study. In many instances this listing does not vary a great deal from previous listings intended for female spouses. The attributes and characteristics of the "good male spouse" are:

- Supports his wife and her presidency
- Encourages and supports his wife's educational endeavors
- Never embarrasses his wife or the college
- Does not expect his wife to cook
- Is a gracious co-host
- Does not get arrested
- Is patient
- Interacts well with a diverse group of people
- Recognizes his wife's time is never really hers. She is always the college president.
- Listens
- Takes care of household responsibilities
- Has a sense of humor
- Never offers his wife advice without solicitation, and when advice is offered never expects his wife to make college decisions based on that advice
- Is open to relocation or comfortable in a commuter marriage
- Recognizes his wife is much more than a college president. She is a woman who works hard to make a difference in her community and make a difference in her family.

Recommendations for Future Research

Research often leaves you asking questions rather than providing all the answers. After examining the role of the female community college president's spouse, I now have more questions than ever. It is clear there is a presidential spouse role, whether it is formalized or not. As a result, I think there are several areas that could be explored to build further not only on this study but other studies as well. I was left asking these are the questions:

What about the presidency and divorce? Due the impact of the presidency, I am curious to know how many marriages do not survive a president's tenure. Additionally, I would like to know how many divorces occur as a result of someone's pathway to the presidency. While I am not naïve enough to suggest either circumstance alone would lead divorce, it is evident there are factors associated with both the presidency and being a presidential spouse that impact the marital relationship.

What about the male community college president's female spouse? Because this study was concerned with male spouses, there was very little insight gained into the role of the female spouse. All trustees suggested there is no difference in spouse expectations based on sex, so it would be interesting to see if the roles of the male spouses in this study are consistent with current female spouse roles. There has been no research on this topic since Vaughan's work in 1987, so other than anecdotal data and insights, we do not know what the current role of the male community college president's female spouse.

What about LGBT spouses and partners? As noted earlier, I purposely chose to study opposite sex, married couples to participate in this study. As a supporter of LGBT individuals and same sex marriages and relationships, I feel we have to start asking questions about their relationships as it relates to the role of the spouse or partner. While we are doing a better job in higher education supporting students when it comes to LGBT issues, we must translate that support to our faculty, staff, and administrators. Not only do we need to ask the questions, we must create a forum where people feel open and safe to discuss the answers. An inaugural meeting of LBGT presidents took place in 2010 even convening a group called Partners of Presidents, but my literature review did not yield much insight on this topic. There is work to be done in this area.

What about single presidents and long-term relationship couples? It is evident from previous research and this study that there are many things a spouse does to support his wife in a college presidency. Several participants in this study questioned how someone single can manage it all and be successful without having the support of a spouse or partner. So, what does that look like for current single presidents? How do they manage with all the functions and events? Who is planning the menu? Who is by their side at galas? Does someone at the college help the single president with such things. What is it like for one to date during the presidency? It would be curious to see if all the roles male spouses play are taken on by someone else or if these roles just go undone. Additionally, what about couples who are in a long-term committed relationship but are not married? What is the partner's role in that type of relationship?

Conclusion

The role of the female community college president's spouse was the topic for this study. Findings from this qualitative study reveal the male spouse has many roles and supports his wife's presidency in a variety of ways. The study yielded five major spouse roles/themes.

1. Life Before the Presidency
2. Role Expectations
3. Public Life Role
4. Private Life Role
5. Impact of the Presidency

From attending public events with his wife to taking care of household responsibilities, the male spouse is very important to his wife's presidency and her overall success. He is a supporter. He is a sounding board. He sometimes cooks, but often takes his wife out to dinner. He is there for her at the end of a long day. These roles are not expectations of the board of trustees but rather a combination of expectations and negotiations between the president and her husband.

The current day male spouse does not vary greatly from the female spouse Kintzer wrote about in the early 1970s. The female spouse of the past supported her husband and his presidency just as the current modern day male spouse supports his wife and her presidency. The difference lies in the ways in which the spouse supports the president. What was once an event planning and entertaining role has become a

confidant and escort role. Ultimately, spouses, presidents, and trustees agree the role of the male spouse is to support the president, so she can be a successful community college leader.

Appendix A

Initial Contact Letter

Dear Dr. XXXX,

I am a doctoral candidate at The University of Texas at Austin, and my dissertation topic is the role of the female community college president's spouse. This qualitative study seeks to gain insight into the role of the male spouse by interviewing a purposefully selected sample of female community college presidents, female community college presidential spouses, and boards of trustees in order to gain their perceptions on the role of the female community college presidential spouse. The goal of this three-person approach is to create a comprehensive, triangulated overview of the male spouse experience from several points of view.

I have selected North Carolina as the region of focus for this study. As a native North Carolinian, a product of the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS), and a former employee of both Pitt Community College and Craven Community College, I have strong ties to my home state. Beyond my appreciation of the NCCCS as a student and educator, there are several reasons I have purposefully selected North Carolina. First, there are currently 14 female presidents, 11 that are married. Second, as a part of a true state system, each president reports to a locally appointed board. Lastly, each married female president in the NCCCS leads a Carnegie classified rural community college. These factors combined lead to a homogenous sample, meaning you, your spouse, and a board of trustee member would be ideal participants for this study.

Participants will be asked to take part in a 90-minute, face-to-face interview, consisting of no more than 20 open ended questions regarding the role of the male spouse. Interviews will be audio recorded, and the researcher will transcribe each interview. Each participant will receive a copy of his/her transcribed interview to make sure the researcher has accurately captured the responses of the participant. Please note that the identity of all participants will be kept confidential, as this study is anonymous. Prior to each interview, the researcher will provide a consent form for each participant to sign regarding his/her willingness to take part in this study.

I will be available throughout the months of June and July to travel the state and conduct interviews. I hope this timeframe works for you, your spouse, and a board member, should you have an interest in taking part in this study. If you would like to participate but this timeframe does not work with your schedule, I will make arrangements to complete interviews via phone, Skype, or another format that works for everyone.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, feel free to contact me at 828-238-3471 or leggettm@mail.utexas.edu, or please contact either of my co-chairs, Dr. John Roueche, Director, Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin at roueche@mail.utexas.edu or Dr. Walter Bumphus, President/CEO, American Association of Community Colleges at wbumphus@aacc.nche.edu.

I recognize that you are extremely busy and you receive many requests of this nature, so thank you in advance for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Mia Leggett
Doctoral Student
The University of Texas at Austin

Appendix B

Updated Initial Contact Letter

Dear President XXXX,

I am a doctoral candidate at The University of Texas at Austin, and my dissertation examines the role of the female community college president's spouse. This qualitative study seeks to gain insight into the role of the male spouse by interviewing a purposefully selected sample of female community college presidents, female community college presidential spouses, and board of trustees in order to gain their perceptions on the role of the female community college presidential spouse. The goal of this three-person approach is to create a comprehensive, triangulated overview of the male spouse experience from several points of view. We thought you may have an interest in this study.

Participants will be asked to take part in a 90-minute, face-to-face interview, consisting of no more than 20 open ended questions regarding the role of the male spouse. Interviews will be audio recorded, and the researcher will transcribe each interview. Each participant will receive a copy of his/her transcribed interview to make sure the researcher has accurately captured the responses of the participant. Please note that the identity of all participants will be kept confidential, as this study is anonymous. Prior to each interview, the researcher will provide a consent form for each participant to sign regarding his/her willingness to take part in this study.

I will be available throughout the month of June to travel and conduct interviews. I hope this timeframe works for you, your spouse, and a board member. If June does not work with your schedule, I will make arrangements to complete interviews via phone, Skype, or another format that works for everyone

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, feel free to contact me at 828-238-3471 or mia.leggett@gmail.com, or my co-chair, Dr. John Roueche, Director, Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin at roueche@mail.utexas.edu.

We recognize that you are extremely busy and you receive many requests of this nature, so thank you in advance for your consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Mia Leggett
Doctoral Student, CCLP
The University of Texas at Austin

Dr. John Roueche
Sid W. Richardson Regents Chair
Director, CCLP
The University of Texas at Aust

Appendix C

Consent Form

IRB APPROVED ON: 06/22/2011
IRB Protocol #2011-05-0005
EXPIRES ON: 06/21/2012
CONSENT FORM 2

Title: An Examination The Role of the Female Community College President's Spouse

Conducted By: Mia S. Leggett

Of The University of Texas at Austin: Educational Administration, 828-238-3471

Supervised by: Dr. John Roueche, 512-471-7545

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. The person in charge of this research will also describe this study to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to take part. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can refuse to participate or stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can stop your participation at any time and your refusal will not impact current or future relationships with UT Austin or the North Carolina Community College System. To do so simply tell the researcher you wish to stop participation. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this consent for your records.

The purpose of this study is to identify the role of the female community college president's spouse as described by female community college presidents, their male spouses, and board of trustee members. Fifteen subjects will participate in this study.

If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to do the following things:

Participate in one, audio-recorded interview about your perspectives on male spouses of female community college presidents.

Total estimated time to participate in study is no more than 1.5 hours.

Risks

A potential risk for this study, though minimal, does exist. There is a potential for participants' identities not to remain confidential. Therefore, the researcher will take appropriate steps to reduce that risk by secure storage and confidential reporting of study results.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefits for participants in this study. However, the potential benefits for this study are in the potential knowledge to be gained by the researcher as it relates to the role of the female community college president's spouse. The benefit gained is to be a part of shaping the lack of current

IRB APPROVED ON: 06/22/2011
EXPIRES ON: 06/21/2012
IRB Protocol #2011-05-0005
CONSENT FORM 2

knowledge on this subject. The greater benefit to society is the building of the knowledge base as well. This study has the potential to provide an overview of the role of the male spouse, adding to the limited current knowledge of this topic.

Compensation:

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Confidentiality and Privacy Protections:

The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate you with it, or with your participation in any study.

The researcher will keep private the details of whom she interviews. She will not disclose information that would allow for the participants to be identified. Participants' individual information will not be discussed with anyone other than researchers working directly with this project. Your data will not be shared with the other participants in this research study.

Participants may request that interviews not be recorded, and participants can request to skip or not answer any question/s they are not comfortable addressing.

The data collected will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home office. The researcher will provide each participant a code name, and that information will be kept secure on a master file key. Because the researcher will transcribe the interviews, no one other than the PI will have access to any of the data collected. The tapes will not be retained after the study is completed and they have been analyzed. Audiotapes will be destroyed after transcription. The master key file will be destroyed when all data collection is completed.

De-identified data and consent forms will be kept for a minimum of three years, meeting the University guidelines.

Because some communication will be via email, the researcher will work from one email address that only she has the password to access. The researcher will also print any correspondence from participants as soon as received and then permanently delete those emails.

The records of this study will be stored securely and kept confidential. Authorized persons from The University of Texas at Austin and members of the Institutional Review Board have the legal right to review your research records and will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. All publications will exclude any information that will make it possible to identify you as a subject. Throughout the study, the researcher will notify you of new information that may become available and that might affect your decision to remain in the study.

IRB APPROVED ON: 06/22/2011
IRB Protocol #2011-05-0005
EXPIRES ON: 06/21/2012
CONSENT FORM 2

Contacts and Questions:

If you have any questions about the study please ask now. If you have questions later, want additional information, or wish to withdraw your participation call the researchers conducting the study. Their names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses are at the top of this page.

If you would like to obtain information about the research study, have questions, concerns, complaints or wish to discuss problems about a research study with someone unaffiliated with the study, please contact the IRB Office at (512) 471-8871 or Jody Jensen, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at (512) 232-2685. Anonymity, if desired, will be protected to the extent possible. As an alternative method of contact, an email may be sent to orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu or a letter sent to IRB Administrator, P.O. Box 7426, Mail Code A 3200, Austin, TX 78713.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and have sufficient information to make a decision about participating in this study. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D

Spouse Questions

All questions are following the semi-structured interview format, meaning there maybe follow-up questions depending upon the interviewee's response. Follow-up questions might include but are not limited to: Tell me a bit more about that; Can you explain what you mean by that; Can you give me more details on; etc.

Tell met about how you met current wife and your courtship that ultimately ended in marriage.

Did you have to change careers or leave behind a career to support her presidency?

Talk to me about your influence on and/or support of her career, from when you first met until now.

How involved are you with the college? General, specifics to follow.

What can you tell me about your role during your application process for her current presidency (or past presidency if there have been any)? Did you discuss as a couple her intent to apply for the presidency? Were you invited to attend any functions? Did the hiring committee/board ask to meet with you during the interview process? Did you feel it was important to be involved in the process?

Much of the research I have reviewed for this study suggests one of the biggest mistakes or often lack of clarity is the relationship between the board and spouse. Can you speak to your involvement with the board from early on until now? How about the board's expectations of you as a presidential spouse? Has the board ever discussed this directly with you and/or your wife? Are there implied expectations, if not direct ones?

Traditionally, presidential spouses have been female, and those females have often taken on very traditional roles such as entertaining, cooking, event planning, etc. How would you compare that traditional role to your role? Do you feel there is an expectation from the community and/or board for you to be involved in this way? What are the similarities or differences?

The president is often noted and regarded in some respects as a local public figure. What is your role in that regard? Do you attend events with your wife? Do you feel you should be by her side in the public eye?

These types of events are often called social work, not socializing, meaning that as a president and president's spouse, the presidential couple must always be on. In essence you are both living logos for the college. Would you say this is an accurate description? Do you feel that you have to always be on when out in public? Do you feel that you represent the institution, or does that fall solely to your wife?

What about friendships? How open can you be with people? Teacher vs. president example.

In your wife's role, she has many responsibilities that require her to spend much time away from home. As a result, have you picked up more roles around the house? How has home life changed as a result of your wife's job?

Often female spouses work closely with the president's assistant or office manager. What is your relationship with your wife's assistant? Do you have access to your wife's calendar? Do you have to make an appointment to see your wife during the day? Or do you have carte blanche to connect with her during the day?

Previous studies speak to the fact that women leaders and men leaders often seek different types of advice from their spouses, such as women presidents often confide in their husbands and seek advice, where as male presidents just often vent to their wives and are not looking for advice. This can be seen as an advisor vs. confidant. Does your wife seek advice from you on how to handle work situations? Are there times when you try to help her solve issues rather than just listen?

Do you define yourself as a presidential spouse or someone who happens to be married to a college president? In other words, do you feel your identity is tied to your wife's presidency?

What would you say is your biggest source of stress in your role as a presidential spouse? What would you say is the greatest source of pleasure in being a presidential spouse?

When meeting you and your wife, has anyone ever assumed that you are the college president, not your wife? How did you respond? How did it make you feel?

Do you have a name such as first husband?

Overall, do you feel the presidency has had a positive or negative impact on your marriage and/or relationship with your wife?

What advice, if any, do you have for new presidential couples, particularly the presidential spouse?

Appendix E

President Questions

All questions are following the semi-structured interview format, meaning there maybe follow-up questions depending upon the interviewee's response. Follow-up questions might include but are not limited to: Tell me a bit more about that; Can you explain what you mean by that; Can you give me more details on that; etc.

Tell me a bit about your pathway to the presidency.

Tell met about how you met current husband and your courtship that ultimately ended in marriage.

Did your husband have to change careers or leave behind a career to support your presidency?

Talk to me about your husband's influence on and/or support of your career, from when you first met until now.

How involved is your husband with the college? General, specifics to follow.

What can you tell me about your husband's role during your application process for your current presidency (or past presidency if there have been any)? Did you discuss as a couple your intent to apply for your current position? Was he invited to attend any functions? Did the hiring committee/board ask you about your husband and/or family during the interview process? Did you feel it was important for your husband to be involved in the process?

Much of the research I have reviewed for this study suggests one of the biggest mistakes or often lack of clarity is the relationship between the board and spouse. Can you speak to your husband's involvement with the board from his initial contact until now? How about the board's expectations of your husband as a presidential spouse? Has the board discussed this issue with you or your husband? If not direct expectations, are they implied expectations?

Traditionally, presidential spouses have been female and those females have often taken on very traditional roles such as entertaining, cooking, event planning, etc. How would you compare that traditional role to your husband's role? Do you feel there is an expectation from the community and/or board your husband to be involved in this way? What are the similarities or differences?

As a president, you are often noted and regarded as a local public figure. What is your husband's role in that regard? Does he attend events with you? Do you feel he should be by your side in the public eye?

These types of events are often called social work, not socializing, meaning that as a president and president's spouse, the presidential couple must always be on. In essence you are both living logos for the college. Would you say this is an accurate description? Do you feel your husband feels he has to always be on when out in public? Do you feel he represents the college, or does that role fall solely to you?

What about his friendships? How open can he be with other people? Teacher vs. president example.

In your role you have many responsibilities that require you to spend much time away from home. As a result, has your husband picked up more roles around the house? Has home life changed as a result of your current job?

Often female spouses work closely with the president's assistant or office manager. What is your husband's relationship with your assistant? Does he have access to your calendar? Does he have to make an appointment to see you during the day? Or, does he have carte blanche to connect with you during the day?

Previous studies speak to the fact that women leaders and men leaders often seek different types of support from their spouses, such as women presidents often confide in their husbands and seek advice, where as male presidents just often vent to their wives and are not looking for advice. This can be seen as an advisor vs. confidant. Do you seek advice from your husband on how to handle work situations? Are there times he tries to help you solve issues rather than just listen?

Would you say your husband defines himself as a presidential spouse or someone who happens to be married to a college president? In other words, do you feel his identity is tied to your presidency?

What would you say is the biggest source of stress for your husband in his role as a presidential spouse? What would you say is the greatest source of pleasure your husband finds in being a presidential spouse?

When meeting you and your husband, has anyone ever assumed that your husband was the college president, not you? How did you respond? How did it make you feel?

Overall, do you feel the presidency has had a positive or negative impact on your marriage and/or relationship with your husband?

What advice, if any, do you have for new presidential couples, particularly the presidential spouse?

Appendix F

Trustee Questions

All questions are following a semi-structured interview format, meaning there maybe follow-up questions depending upon the interviewee's response. Follow-up questions might include but are not limited to: Tell me a bit more about that; Can you explain what you mean by that; Can you give me more details on; etc.

Tell met about how you came to be a trustee.

How involved is the president's spouse with the college? General, specifics to follow.

What can you tell me about the spouse's role during the application process? Did trustees feel it was important for the spouse to be involved? Did you invite spouses to attend any functions? Did the hiring committee and/or BOT ask to meet with spouses during the interview process? Were there different expectations for male and female spouses?

Much of the research I have reviewed for this study suggests one of the biggest mistakes or often lack of clarity is the relationship between the board and the presidential spouse. Can you speak to that? What was the board's involvement with the presidential spouse from early on? How about the board's expectations of the presidential spouse? Did the board discuss with the president and her spouse any expectations of the spouse? If not direct expectations, are there implied expectations of the spouse?

Traditionally, presidential spouses have been female, and those females have often taken on roles such as entertaining, cooking, event planning, etc. How would you compare that traditional role to the current presidential spouse's role? Do you feel there is an expectation from the community and/or BOT for him to be involved in this way? What are the similarities or differences?

The president is often noted and regarded as a local public figure. What is the spouse's role in that regard? Does he attend events with his wife? Do you feel he should be by her side in public or at certain public events?

These types of events are often called social work, not socializing, meaning that as a president and president's spouse, the presidential couple must always be on. In essence both are living logos for the college. Would you say this is an accurate description? Do you feel that the spouse has to always be on when out in public? Does he represent the college, or does that solely fall to his wife, the president?

What about friendships? How open can he be with people? Teacher vs. president example. (This is a scenario that I will go over in the interview.)

Often female spouses work closely with the president's assistant or office manager. Do you know what kind of relationship the spouse has with the president's assistant? Does he have access to his wife's calendar?

Previous studies speak to the fact that women leaders and men leaders often seek different types of advice from their spouses, such as women presidents often confide in their husbands and seek advice, where as male presidents just often see their spouse as a sounding board. This can be seen as an advisor vs. confidant. Do you know how the president views her husband in this regard? Should the president seek advice from her husband?

Can the presidential spouse be too involved or not involved enough in the presidency? Where would you say the current presidential spouse falls on the spectrum?

What if anything, will the board rethink or do differently with future presidential spouses?

What advice, if any, do you have for new presidential couples, particularly the presidential spouse?

Appendix G

Spouse Profile

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Race:

Highest level of education attained:

Occupation:

When did your wife become president of the college?

How long have you been married to your current spouse?

Do you and your spouse reside at the same location/home?

Is this your first marriage?

Is this your spouse's first marriage?

Children, age:

Are you compensated your work as a presidential spouse? This does not include any funding/monies for spouse travel, conferences, retreats, etc.:

Appendix H

President Profile

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Race:

When did you become president of college X?

Is this your first presidency?

How long have you been married to your current spouse?

Do you and your spouse reside at the same location/home?

Is this your first marriage?

Is this your spouse's first marriage?

Children, age:

Is your spouse compensated for his work as a presidential spouse? This does not include any funding/monies for spouse travel, conferences, retreats, etc.

Appendix I

Trustee Profile

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Race:

Highest level of education attained

Occupation:

Marital Status:

How long have you been a trustee?

Trustee role:

Is the presidential spouse compensated for his work as presidential spouse? This does not include any funding/monies for spouse travel, conferences, retreats, etc.:

Appendix J

Spouse Roles, Initial Findings

- Advice for future presidential couples
- BOT expectations
- Entertaining/Event planning
- Holding one's tongue
- House responsibility
- Impact on spouse's career
- Impact of the presidency on presidential couple
- Life after the presidency
- Living logo—wife
- Living logo—spouse
- Mistaken identity
- Official title
- Parenting
- Pillow talk
- Pleasure
- Public events
- Search process
- Self identity
- Sounding board vs. advisor

- Stress
- Support of wife's career
- Support of wife's presidency
- Wife expectations
- Working with president's assistant

Appendix K

Spouse Roles, A Second Look

- Role Expectations
 - BOT expectations
 - Wife expectations
- Search Process
- Traditional Roles
 - Entertaining/Event planning
 - Working with president's assistant
- Private Life
 - Holding one's tongue
 - Pillow talk
 - Sounding board vs. advisor
- Home Life
 - House responsibility
 - Parenting
- Advice for Presidential Couples
- Life After the Presidency
- Living Logo
 - Wife
 - Spouse
- Identity
 - Mistaken identity

Official title

Self-identity

- Public Events
- Impact of the Presidency

Pleasure

Stress

Impact on spouse's career

- Support Role

Wife's career/presidency

Appendix L

Spouse Roles, A Final Look

- Overarching Spouse Role
 - Supporter
- Life Before the Presidency
 - Impact on spouse's career
 - Support of wife's career/presidency
 - Search process
- Role Expectations
 - BOT expectations
 - Wife expectations
 - Traditional roles (Entertaining, working with president's assistant)
- Public Life Role
 - Living logo or living logos?
 - Public events
 - Mistaken identity
 - Official title
 - Identity
- Private Life Role
 - Holding one's tongue
 - Pillow talk

Sounding board vs. advisor

House responsibility

Parenting

- Impact of the Presidency

Pleasure

Stress

- Miscellaneous

Advice for presidential couples

Life after the president

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